NAVAL LESSONS OF THE GREAT WAR

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To Lieutenant-Tracy B. Kittredge, U.S.N.R.F., in grateful remembrance of his efficient services as a member of my staff at the London Headquarters and, particularly, of his invaluable assistance in preparing the statements substantiating "Certain Naval Lessons of the Great War" before the Senate Investigating Committee, March-May, 1920

June, 1920

William S. Sims

NAVAL LESSONS OF THE GREAT WAR

A REVIEW OF THE SENATE NAVAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CRITICISMS BY ADMIRAL SIMS OF THE POLICIES AND METHODS OF JOSEPHUS DANIELS

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

REAR-ADMIRAL B. A. FISKE

U. S. NAVY

BY

TRACY BARRETT KITTREDGE

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NAVAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

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GARDEN CITY, N. Y., AND TORONTO

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

1921

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TO

ADMIRAL WILLIAM SOWDEN SIMS

UNITED STATES NAVY

THE INCARNATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE NAVY

ITS LEADER IN SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONS AGAINST A FOREIGN FOE

ITS DEFENDER AGAINST INTERNAL DANGERS

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

FOREWORD

This book is a record of official testimony given to Congress by navy officers under oath.

It shows that the principal naval lesson of the war is the menace to the national honor and safety that was involved in committing the management of its navy to unworthy hands.

The Secretary of the Navy should be a man of the highest order of ability, knowledge and foresight. This book shows that Secretary Daniels was so far below this standard that the Navy would have been caught wholly unprepared when we entered the war, and would have been ineffective during the war, if certain navy officers had not sacrificed or endangered their positions, by putting through important measures, without his knowledge.

The Secretary of the Navy should be a man of the highest character. This book shows that Secretary Daniels, both in writing over his official signature, and in oral official testimony before Congressional Committees, made many statements about important naval matters within his cognizance, that were absolutely false.

Bradley A. Fiske,
Rear-Admiral, U. S. N. (Retired).

PREFACE

I have endeavored to present in this volume a review of the recent naval investigation, and an analysis of the evidence relating to the naval lessons of the war.

With most of the questions involved, I have been personally familiar, since those anxious months of 1917 when I became a member of Admiral Sims' staff, first as a civilian volunteer, later as a reserve officer, in the Intelligence Section of his headquarters in London. The lamentable failure of the Navy Department to meet the situation in 1917, even with the resources then available, has long been so well known to almost every man who served abroad in the early months of the war, that Admiral Sims' letter and his testimony seem a very mild and exceedingly temperate statement of the conditions then existing.

It has been my good fortune not only to have served under Admiral Sims abroad, but to have been of some slight assistance to him during his appearance before the senate naval investigating committee. At the request of its chairman, Senator Hale, I was ordered to Washington, by the Navy Department, to assist the Admiral. I therefore was able to follow the investigation at first hand.

As a reserve officer, I am naturally keenly interested in the welfare and future of the Navy. The lessons of the war have been so little understood that it seemed to me that an effort should be made to clarify and condense the facts established by the testimony, and by official records, in such a way as to give those interested in the Navy a definite understanding of the meaning, and the significance to the nation, of Admiral Sims' comments on the naval lessons of the war.

This book is the result of this feeling. I alone am responsible for its conception, contents and conclusions. I have made use of my personal knowledge of the facts at issue, only to unify and clarify the actual evidence given to the Senate committee under oath by the various witnesses. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that all testimony was sworn testimony and, as a result, that any statements deliberately at variance with truth constitute perjury. Most of the testimony was, therefore, unusually conscientious and straightforward.

The greatest care has been exercised to insure accuracy of statement. Rather than summarize the testimony I have preferred to include a large number of actual quotations, that the reader may have evidence of the correctness of the conclusions stated.

The material used is without exception taken from official sources; chiefly from the actual record of the Hearings of the Naval Investigation; partly from other Hearings; from the Reports of the Secretary of the Navy; and only in some few cases, for illustrative purposes, from other books and sources.

I have had the temerity to dedicate this volume to the officer who is to-day the outstanding figure in our Navy, the Admiral under whom it was my privilege to serve during the Great War. I have neither sought nor obtained permission from him to do so and make my apologies to him for what may seem to him an impertinence. It should be needless to add that Admiral Sims had no knowledge of my intention to write this book, nor will he have had any knowledge of its contents until it appears in print.

I wish to acknowledge my grateful appreciation to Colonel Robert M. Thompson of the Navy League for his counsel and assistance; to Rear Admiral B. A. Fiske, U. S. N. (ret.), for his kindness in consenting to introduce this

volume to the public; to Rear Admiral W. F. Fullam, U. S. N. (ret.), for his friendly advice; and to the officers who served in the Navy Department during the war, for their service to the nation in admitting, under cross-examination, the truth of every vital point raised by Admiral Sims.

The country as a whole owes much to the Honourable Frederick Hale, United States Senator from Maine, the Chairman of the Investigating Sub-Committee of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, for his patient but insistent and searching effort to bring to light matters of the most vital importance to the navy and to the nation alike.

This volume is not, of course, anything more than a review of the evidence with regard to the lessons of the war, with a very brief and exceedingly tentative suggestion as to the significance of those lessons. If it serves to make possible a better understanding and construction of the present state of the Navy, its purpose will have been accomplished.

TRACY BARRETT KITTREDGE.

Berkeley, California,
December, 1920.

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NAVAL LESSONS OF THE GREAT WAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE STATE OF THE NAVY

I

THE nation has been amazed and confused, during the last year by revelations, of the most sensational and of the most conflicting character, with regard to the state of the Navy; its administration by Mr. Josephus Daniels; and the part it played in the Great War.

Two investigations have been conducted by a subcommittee of the Naval Affairs Committee of the United States Senate; one, into the method used by the Secretary in making medal awards for war service; the other, into the condition of the Navy from 1913 to 1917 and into the conduct of the war at sea by the Navy Department.

To a public not familiar with naval matters, the significance of the conditions that were revealed in these investigations is perhaps not fully appreciated. The great volume of testimony, presented during the four months occupied by the investigations; the apparent contradiction between the testimony of the several witnesses; the bitter personal reflections on officers of the service and upon the Secretary of the Navy; all have contributed to confusing the mind of the country as to the issues at stake.

The condition of the Navy today is, however, a matter of immediate interest and concern to every citizen. The explanation of the demoralization that now reigns in the naval service can be found in the Hearings of the Senate Committee. In these is presented the extraordinary spectacle of a member of the Cabinet being publicly pilloried by some

of the most distinguished officers in the Navy. In the Navy as a whole, nearly every self-respecting officer today approves, openly or at heart, the condemnations heaped upon the present Secretary, Mr. Josephus Daniels.

As a result of certain of the policies that have been put into force in the Navy Department in the past seven years many splendid traditions of the Navy have been discarded, the spirit of the service has been greatly impaired, the fighting efficiency of the fleet has been reduced to almost nothing.

An officer in the Navy who resigned recently, Commander A. D. Turnbull, writing in the *North American Review*, says:

"Officers and men grown grey in the service look with breaking hearts upon its disintegration. They have watched their valiant efforts to save the situation brought to nothing. They have seen preferment offered to — and alas! accepted by — a scattered few of their brothers and shipmates, who could not keep loyalty to service and country above something that passes as loyalty to an individual. They have seen merit and initiative pretty well crushed. . . .

"Mr. Daniels found the Navy in good material condition, manned by a strong, self-respecting personnel, animated from end to end by a fine spirit and a high purpose.

"Mr. Daniels, after seven years of office, will leave the Navy a battered hulk, which it will take years of careful repairing to make seaworthy."

The condition of the Navy demands national attention. It is the purpose of this volume to present in concise form the deeper meaning and importance of the Sims-Daniels controversy.

II

On June 26, 1915, the Secretary of the Navy, in addressing the officers of the Atlantic Fleet, at the Naval War College at Newport, R. I., said:

"The duty of the officers of the navy is to ask themselves constantly this searching question: 'Have we a maximum of

efficiency?' This question must relate to every element of material and personnel that makes the navy ready for the call that may be made upon it. If the navy is not what it ought to be, the fault is properly laid at the door of the Secretary, because some one must be responsible. He cannot evade responsibility. . . . The public will and should hold him to account."

This passage can be taken as the text of this volume. It provides an excellent point of departure for a review of Mr. Daniels' administration.

His long régime is drawing to a close. The navy has been through an ordeal, the bitterness of which few, outside of the naval service, can even imagine. The founders of our government, in seeking to prevent the military forces from assailing the popular liberties, placed them under the direction of civilian secretaries. The army and the navy were thus made subject to the unrestricted power of a civilian. But, in a democratic country, the exercise of power carries with it a corresponding responsibility. The time has come when this should be made clear to those who administer the forces upon which we depend for our national defence.

III

The United States is entering upon a period of history in which the soundness of its institutions and the strength of its people will be subjected to crucial tests. The "war that was to end war" has thrown the world into confusion. A new world is emerging with new tendencies, new forces, new problems, which indicate all too clearly that, in the future as in the past, war will be the ultimate test of a nation. We are, it is true, happily situated, with an ocean on either side of us separating us from any conceivable external danger. This very fact, however, gives new significance to the function of the navy as our first line of na-

tional defence. Our political integrity, our world-wide interests, our seaborne commerce depend, in the last analysis, upon naval strength and efficiency. If our navy is adequate, well trained, well manned, ably led, we need have no fears for our security. In any future war, such a navy would serve as an impenetrable shield, behind which we could make calmly our military preparations; as an offensive force that could harass, isolate and blockade the enemy, and make possible the transport overseas, if necessary, of armies composed of millions of men.

We could not have done this in 1917. We could not do it to-day. That is the crucial point to be remembered in considering our naval problem. All officers who knew the situation in 1917, or who know the condition of the Navy to-day, including Mr. Daniels' chief naval advisers, have so testified. We were not ready for war in 1917. Had we then faced a great power singlehanded, we would now, as Admiral Plunkett testified, be paying the indemnity. As a nation we cannot afford to permit such a situation to occur again. We must demand of those responsible for our national defence a genuine accounting.

The naval investigation brought to light the salient features of Mr. Daniels' administration. In the pages that follow there will be reviewed evidence proving that he regarded the Navy primarily as a source of political capital for himself and his party; that he either never understood or completely ignored the only reason for a navy's existence — its readiness for war.

It will be made clear that he has ruled as a despot, ruthlessly crushing opposition, by czaristic and underhanded methods, while publicly parading himself as an ardent democrat; that from 1913 to 1917, he enforced a policy of pacifism upon the Navy; that, in consequence, he prevented any real preparedness for war; and that, all the while he was deceiving the country and lulling it into a sense of false

security by declaring in mellifluous phrases that the Navy was ready " from stem to stern " for any emergency.

It will be demonstrated that he repeatedly made false statements,— perhaps inspired by lack of understanding rather than by intent to deceive,— to the country, to Congress and to the President, concerning the Navy and its condition; that he made incorrect assertions, officially and in writing, to the United States Senate; that he gave testimony under oath before the Senate Committee which was completely at variance with the testimony of other witnesses, and with the facts established by the evidence of official records.

As a public official Mr. Daniels has flagrantly violated his trust. It would be disastrous to permit him to escape his responsibility. " The public will and should hold him to account," as Mr. Daniels himself said in 1915.

CHAPTER II

NAVAL ORGANIZATION AND PREPAREDNESS — 1798–1917

I

WE are often assured that history never repeats itself. Yet there are singular coincidences. The following quotation illustrates the point:

"As we look back at the history of this period (the first year of war), it seems incredible that the Navy Department with the vast resources at its command . . . should have been able to show only such meagre results during seven months of war. Lest this statement be thought too severe, we quote the candid omission (of the responsible naval officials): 'But for some few redeeming successes . . . the whole belligerent operations would have been pronounced weak and imbecile failures.'"

". . . This was mainly due to the extreme slowness and deliberation with which the Navy Department moved. . . . It is safe to say that the American people today would not tolerate for a week a Secretary of the Navy who conducted the operations of the war in the timorous, procrastinating and inefficient fashion in which they were conducted in 1861.

The only surprising feature of this quotation is the date, 1861. Otherwise it might be applied to the year 1917 and to the administration of Secretary Daniels. But the last sentence shows the temerity of its writer, Mr. J. R. Soley, himself a graduate of Annapolis and once Assistant Secretary of the Navy, from whose life of Admiral Porter the quotation is taken.

How despairing, indeed, is the task of the historian!

Every investigator in the domain of science knows that in determining the processes at work in nature he is conferring a boon on humanity. He realizes that practical application will be made immediately of any discoveries which will tend to ameliorate the lot of man or render life in civilized societies more secure. In science, as in business or in the individual life, wisdom comes from experience; we learn by our mistakes. But the writer of history, if he concerns himself at all with the results of his researches, is obliged to admit that his work is fruitless. No matter how clearly he may show the inevitable sequence of cause and effect, or demonstrate the operation of definite processes in human affairs, he must perforce resign himself to seeing his conclusions ignored, as well by the people as by the politicians to whom they entrust the direction of their common destinies. He must submit to witnessing, in every period of national crisis, the recurrence of the same problems and the repetition of the same errors. One has only to read Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian wars (432–404 B. C.) and his description of the failure of democracy to heed the lessons of experience, or consider the consequences of disaster, and then reflect for a moment on the performance of our government in the Great War, to be disheartened.

II

The ultimate test of any state or people is war. Throughout history, war has been the agency that has begun and terminated political and national existences; that has altered racial, language, cultural and religious boundaries; that has determined for good or ill the direction of human social development. We can witness to-day no evidence that wars have ceased to play a determining part in the shaping of the affairs of man.

It was by war that we came into existence as a nation;

it was chiefly by warfare, organized or sporadic, that the American nation expanded from the Atlantic seaboard to the shores of the Pacific. It was war that sealed and cemented our national union and led to the freeing of the slaves. It was war, again, that made us over from a provincial state into a world power. The destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, signalized a complete transformation in our relations with the other nations of the world. Nor will our most recent war be without equally significant influence on our national destiny, though we are still too fresh from the fray to estimate accurately the probable consequences.

Success in war has, throughout the ages, been determined by certain clearly defined factors and conditions. Every schoolboy realizes that our independent existence as a nation depends upon our ability and willingness to maintain it, when necessary, by war. As a nation we believe and expect that our government will take adequate measures to ensure our success in war. We assume that the known principles of warfare, which alone determine success or failure, will be heeded, in peace and in war, by the responsible departments of our government, to whom we entrust the national defence. We take it for granted that the Army and the Navy will be so organized and administered as to provide us with adequate means for defence. But in the light of history, have we any reason for our assumption?

If we need any answer to such a question, we can find it in the testimony of many distinguished officers of the Navy before the investigating committee of the Senate a few months ago. In going through the voluminous evidence presented by each of more than a dozen officers, who held high and responsible positions during the war, one seeks, almost in vain, to find a single fundamental military principle that was not violated by Mr. Josephus Daniels' department.

To those familiar with our military and naval policy in the past, however, the revelations of the naval investigation sounded strangely familiar. Students of military history, who have written for us the unvarnished tale of the circumstances under which we have entered upon other wars, have revealed similar conditions. In times of peace we have complacently assumed, as did Mr. Bryan, that we would never have another war; but that, if we did, a million men would spring to arms overnight; though where they would get the arms to which to spring was a mystery we never investigated. Accustomed from childhood to read of the famous exploits at arms, of which our people have shown themselves capable when properly armed, trained and led, we have allowed our politicians to neglect our national defences; to waste money, intended to provide the country with an efficient army and an adequate navy, in maintaining outlying and isolated army posts and obsolete and unserviceable navy yards, for purely political reasons — "to give jobs to patriots" as the Charlotte (N. C.) *Observer* put it, in dealing with Mr. Daniels' probable policies in 1913.

III

If the Navy, because of weakness or unpreparedness, is unready for war at the moment the enemy chooses to strike, it will be destroyed or bottled up. We will then be open to enemy attack, our commerce will be cut off, our coasts will be bombarded, our soil invaded.

Yet we usually fail to realize that the Navy cannot provide us with the defence for which it is maintained unless it is of sufficient strength and efficiency to meet the possible enemy with reasonable prospect of success in battle. The Navy cannot win such success in battle unless it has a sufficient number of all the various types of vessels needed to make a well rounded fighting fleet; unless there are adequate

and strategically situated repair, docking and supply facilities to keep the vessels at all times materially fit for battle. The Navy cannot fulfil its mission unless its personnel, officers and men, are adequate in numbers, properly trained for war and actuated by that conscious pride in its efficiency and by that fighting spirit which constitute the morale of the service.

The Navy cannot successfully wage war unless it is led by officers well versed in strategy and tactics, and is guided in its operations by carefully prepared policies and war plans. These conditions cannot be satisfied unless the Navy Department is so organized and co-ordinated, that it can develop and maintain the highest state of material, personnel and moral preparedness for war.

Few of these conditions have ever been realized. Not only in our latest war, but many times before, the same defects and shortcomings have been revealed by the stress of war; the same temporary expedients have been devised to meet the war emergencies; and the war has come to an end just when the Navy, or the Army, as the case may be, was becoming approximately ready to fight with real effectiveness. As soon as the war came to an end, the experience gained was forgotten; the lessons to be derived went undiscovered and unheeded.

Admiral Stephen B. Luce, Admiral A. T. Mahan, Admiral B. A. Fiske, General Upton, Theodore Roosevelt, and many other students of military and naval history have more than demonstrated these conditions in past wars. The naval investigation has enlightened us as to the extent of their repetition in the present war. Unless precautionary steps are taken the next war will witness the recurrence of exactly the same monotonous but highly dangerous phenomena.

IV

The Navy Department was created by the Act of Congress of April 30, 1798. Previous to that time the War Department had controlled the few frigates in service, but the threat of a war with France compelled recognition of the necessity for a separate administration of the Navy. From 1798 to 1815 the Navy was managed entirely by the civilian Secretary, without any assistance or responsible advice from naval officers. This exclusion of the military element from the control of the Navy made it impossible for the Navy to prepare for war or to fight effectively.

This was illustrated in 1812, when the Navy Department, in a state of panic, demonstrated its incapacity by laying up the entire navy lest it should be swept out of existence by the British cruisers. Captains Stewart and Bainbridge protested successfully against this policy, with the result that American frigates were able to strike severe blows at British trade, bombard the British shores and win several notable victories over single British war vessels. But there was no fleet action in the War of 1812. As a matter of fact, we had no fleet — if we except the one built by Commodore Perry on Lake Erie. The Navy Department was not able to prevent the burning of the Capitol or the landing of British troops on our soil.

As a result of the pitiful incompetency of an exclusively civilian direction of a highly technical naval service, Congress in 1815 provided for the creation of a Board of Navy Commissioners, composed of three post captains of the Navy (the highest rank then in existence) to assist the Secretary. The wording of the act was faulty, however, in that it made no distinction between the military and civil branches of the department. The result was that the three commissioners, instead of directing the military activities of the Navy, came to be charged chiefly with the administration

of the civil branch, with the supply, ordnance and construction work. This led inevitably to friction and difficulty. In 1842 the Navy Department was therefore reorganized and the bureaus were established to take over the administration of the civil branch. At the same time the Board of Commissioners, instead of being retained to perform those military functions for which it was created, was abolished. This left the Secretary in the entirely false position of a civilian called upon to administer the affairs of the executive department of the government having to do with naval matters, without a professional assistant. Writing in 1902, Admiral Luce said of this reorganization:

"No provision was made for any direction of naval operations save by the action of the Secretary, a civilian. The organization was one that could work only while the country was at peace and military considerations could be neglected. People generally scouted the idea that peace could ever be disturbed. The Civil War rudely dispelled this idle dream and proved the falsity of the theory on which the organization of the Department was based." (*Proceedings of the Naval Institute,* 1902.)

V

The Civil War brought confusion into the Department. No provisions or plans had been made for any belligerent activities. The bureaus were absorbed in the sudden and great demands made upon them by the work of a purely civil character. The Secretary was without military assistance in the administration of the personnel of the Navy and in the direction of military operations and "found himself in a complete state of isolation."

Makeshift arrangements had to be improvised to enable the department to meet the sudden and pressing demands upon it. The Secretary called on Captain Silas H. Stringham to take charge of the Office of Detail, in charge of personnel. Then, on April 1, 1861, President Lincoln directed

Captain Samuel Barron, who already held a commission as captain in the Confederate navy, to take over and organize the Bureau of Detail. This order was not carried into effect, as the President revoked it when the circumstances were explained to him. But it illustrates the chaos that prevailed.

The department found itself in 1861, as it did later, in 1898 and in 1917, with a war on its hands and no one competent to direct war operations. There were several efforts made to organize the bureau chiefs into a Board of Admiralty, or to provide a board of officers who would exercise the military control over operations. But these efforts were resultless. Finally the position of Assistant Secretary was created and a former naval officer, Captain Gustavus V. Fox, was appointed to fill it. He practically took over the direction of the military side of the department and became, by force of circumstances, a kind of chief of naval staff. Various boards were organized to handle military matters falling outside the scope of the activities of the bureaus. This included the "Committee on Conference," which owed its existence to a civilian, Professor A. D. Bache, the Superintendent of the Coast Survey. This committee, the membership of which included a number of able officers, such as Captain S. F. DuPont, U. S. N., and Commander C. H. Davis, U. S. N., became in reality the strategy board, or plans section, of the improvised war staff. Other emergency boards were appointed to discharge temporarily the other military functions of the department, for which no previous provision had been made. Taken together, these boards ultimately met the issue and became a temporary naval general staff.

For the first two years of the war, however, the utmost confusion prevailed. Improvised plans of campaign proved faulty and led to disastrous failures. The operations off Charleston, from 1861 to 1863, demonstrated by their futility

the consequences of having a military department of the government so organized that no provision was made for war. Admiral DuPont, in charge of these operations, wrote to the department on June 3, 1863:

"When I left Washington (in October, 1862) there was really nothing matured, though I was firmly impressed with the fixed determination of the department that Charleston must be attacked."

The Navy Department thought Charleston could be taken by the monitors alone, without army co-operation, but every effort to do this failed. So with many other of the early attempts. Yet many very able men were in the department! The failure was not theirs, but was that of the system, or lack of system, against which they had to struggle.

The Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, himself recognized the condition, in his annual reports, with a frankness that stands in refreshing contrast to Mr. Daniels' efforts at concealment. In his annual reports for 1861 and later years, Secretary Welles pointed out that when war came there had been no one in the department to plan or direct military operations. "Hence the views of the department were speculative and uncertain." Mr. Fox and the improvised boards ultimately provided a successful war organization for the department. But two years had been lost. Many blunders were made, and many disastrous delays occurred which could have been avoided had the department been organized and conducted as a military organization.

VI

After the Civil War the machinery that had been developed during the war was wiped out. Says Admiral Luce:

"The lesson of the Civil War was thrown away on us, and the department relapsed into a state looking to the early advent of the millennium when war should cease."

Even the office of Assistant Secretary was abolished. The department reverted to the administration of civil affairs by the bureaus, and to the direction of all the military activities of the Navy by the civilian Secretary, who was again left without responsible military assistants or advisers.

Repeatedly in the next thirty years "the impotence of the Navy Department to deal with questions relating to war was made painfully manifest." In 1873, when the Spanish seized the *Virginius* on the high seas, and executed a number of the crew, after a farcical court-martial, war seemed imminent. Again there was confusion. The only thing the department could not do, apparently, was to go to war. Admiral Porter was called upon for counsel and would probably have been entrusted with the direction of military affairs had war come. But the panic passed, and nothing was done to remedy conditions in the department.

Secretary W. C. Whitney, in his report for 1885, stated that it was doubtful if there was then a single ship in the Navy which could fight. He vainly urged a reorganization of the department. In 1889 Secretary Tracy again laid bare the glaring defects of the organization. Again nothing was done.

In 1892, when sailors from the *Baltimore* were assaulted in Valparaiso, relations with Chile became very strained. "Once more," writes Admiral Luce (*Naval Institute* 1902) there was "brought out in a strong light the incapacity of the Navy Department to deal with the problems of war." Again, aid had to be summoned in from without the department. But the tension soon passed and with it the effort to include in the departmental organization a provision for dealing with the problems involved in preparation for war and in the conduct of war operations.

VII

This situation was well illustrated once again in the Spanish War. War with Spain had seemed a probability for some years before hostilities began. The *Maine* was blown up on February 18, 1898. The war did not begin until April 21, 1898. Yet no steps had been taken by the Navy Department to provide for possible war activities. It is quite true that the vessels of the Navy were in good condition and that the personnel were efficient and well trained; but no official war plans had been prepared, and the Navy had no military direction to plan, prepare for, conduct and co-ordinate war operations.

In 1886, however, through the efforts of Admiral Luce and other able officers, a naval war college had been established at Newport. For the first time officers of the Navy began to study war. Captain A. T. Mahan had been assigned to duty there and had written his masterly analyses of sea power and naval warfare. The war college had prepared tentative, but unofficial, plans for war with Spain. It had trained officers who knew something of strategy. This was to save the situation in 1898.

When war broke out on April 21st, the Navy Department, as has been stated, was without a war policy, war plans, or a war staff. The confusion and uncertainty of 1812, of 1861, of 1872, of 1893 again prevailed. Dewey with the small Asiatic fleet was at Hong Kong, a neutral port, awaiting orders. International law requires the naval vessels of belligerents to leave neutral ports within twenty-four hours. Yet no orders were sent to Dewey. Three days passed. Still Dewey was without news from his government. On April 24, the Navy Department received a dispatch from him, with the information that the Governor of Hong Kong had notified him that he must leave the port with his fleet within forty-eight hours. As it was Sunday, the Navy De-

partment was practically closed. Appreciating the importance of the dispatch, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, in the absence of the Secretary of the Navy, took it at once to the President.

Admiral Luce thus describes the scene that followed:

"With the President were the Secretary of State, the Attorney General and one or two others. The dispatch from Admiral Dewey, and the reply to be sent were discussed by those present. The President then dictated the dispatch to Dewey to proceed to Manila and attack the Spanish naval force assembled there. The dispatch was written out by the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and handed to the President, who read it aloud. It was approved with the adding of the word 'destroy' so as to read, 'capture or destroy.' The dispatch was then taken to the Navy Department where it was rendered into cipher. The Secretary of the Navy was not with the President when the latter dictated the message, but he saw it later in the day, signed it and it was sent.

"War had been in the air, so to speak, for six months. The order to blockade the Cuban ports was dated April 21. Yet it was left for the Governor of Hong Kong, three days later, to order an American squadron to sea, with a home port 6,000 miles away." (*Proceedings of the Naval Institute,* 1902, p. 848.)

The results of such a method of devising war plans and determining on military operations were clearly revealed by the difficult situation in which Dewey found himself after the victory of May 1. Although the Spanish fleet was totally destroyed, Dewey had to lie off Manila, practically impotent, in an isolated and trying position. No arrangements had been made to reinforce him, or to reap the fruits of his naval victory by prompt action against the Spanish in the Philippines. If we had had in our military departments any provision for war, there would have been well-considered war plans. Dewey would have known even before the declaration of war what was expected of him. Reinforcements would have been started from San Francisco in time to profit im-

mediately by his victory. Their timely arrival would in all probability have averted the Philippine Insurrection and much blood and treasure would have been saved.

Immediately after the outbreak of war, the Navy Department once more endeavoured, under the stress and amidst the confusion of war activities, to extemporize a makeshift military branch. A Naval War Board, or "Strategy Board" as it was generally termed, was organized, Captain A. T. Mahan being one of the members. This board was entrusted with the devising of war plans, and the other military functions of a general staff. Resort was had to the war plans drawn up at the Naval War College. In the absence of any other plans, the operations of Admiral Sampson and General Shafter were based largely on these. Our superiority over the Spanish forces was so soon and so easily established that our war organization and effort suffered no real test. The story would have been very different had we met an enemy of real strength and efficiency.

VIII

After the Spanish War, many efforts were made to apply the lessons of the war to our military organizations, and to remedy their defects. The army was reorganized during Mr. Elihu Root's tenure of office as Secretary of War, and it was given a general staff. But no similar action was taken in the case of the Navy Department. President Roosevelt, and several of the Secretaries of the Navy who served in his cabinet, urged vainly upon Congress the necessity for the reorganization of the department, and the creation of a naval staff.

The Navy League, under the guidance of Col. R. M. Thompson, began its compaign on behalf of a sound naval policy and for twenty years it has fought valiantly and on the whole successfully to improve the efficiency of the Navy.

But it was some years before its work began to produce results. In 1900, the General Board of the Navy was established by a general order of the Secretary of the Navy, to study questions involving policy, and to prepare war plans; but it was not given legislative recognition until 1916. The General Board proved extremely useful in providing the successive Secretaries with intelligent advice on military matters. But its functions were purely advisory, and it had no authority to supervise the military activities of the Navy. More often than not its advice was disregarded.

In 1909, a commission was appointed by President Roosevelt, composed of two former Secretaries of the Navy, W. H. Moody and Paul Morton, with Congressman A. G. Dayton, and Rear Admirals Luce, Mahan, Evans, Folger and Cowles, to review the organization of the Navy Department. This commission made an illuminating report, calling attention to the non-existence of any military branch in the department, and recommending that the Secretary be given competent naval advisers to co-ordinate, under his direction, all the purely military functions of the department, including the activities of the bureaus. His chief adviser was to be practically a chief of naval staff with the title "Chief of the Division of Naval Operations." Congress failed, however, to take any action.

Secretary Meyer, in 1909, initiated, on his own responsibility, the "Aide" system. This was a distinct step in advance, although it did not provide for a definite co-ordination of the military activities of the navy, by a responsible naval staff. There was an Aide for Operations as the chief naval adviser of the Secretary, with Aides for Material, Personnel and Inspection, to assist the Secretary in co-ordinating the military activities of the Navy. No legislative sanction was given to this measure, however, and it was left within the power of later Secretaries to continue it or not, as they pleased.

As a result, when Mr. Josephus Daniels became Secretary in 1913, he was able in a short time to vitiate most of Mr. Meyer's work, either by allowing the positions of Aides to remain unfilled or by failing to ask or follow their advice in military matters.

IX

We can hardly hope that our good fortune will always continue to save us from the consequences of the mal-administration of our national defences. Sooner or later the day will come when we may have to meet singlehanded a strong and well-prepared enemy. As Congressman Gardner remarked in October, 1914, in calling attention to our unpreparedness at that time, "bullets cannot be stopped with bombast, nor powder vanquished by platitudes." If we neglect our first line of defence or allow it to be misused as an eleemosynary institution for the support of indigent politicians, we should not expect nor hope to escape disaster.

A review of our naval history will show that our navy in every crisis and in every war has laboured under the same handicaps in preparing for war and in fighting. There has been no provision made in time of peace even for the possibility of war. The Navy until 1915 had no provision in its organization for the handling of military activities or for the conduct of war operations. In 1917, there was a military branch of the department, but it had been established too short a time and had been so much hampered by the action of the Secretary that conditions in 1917 were little better than in 1812, 1861, 1873, 1892 or 1898. In each of these cases, a naval staff, under one name or another, had to be improvised during the crisis, as it was found impossible to conduct a war successfully without it. But the lesson of experience was disregarded and the passing of the

crisis marked the passing of the machinery indispensable to successful naval operations.

We entered each war, as a result of the lack of a naval staff, without any real preparation; with no war plans, with insufficient personnel and without reserves; with the vessels of the Navy not in a condition to fight; with inadequate docking and repair facilities; with a navy built, apparently, without regard to war needs and lacking many essential types of vessels. All these conditions were due primarily to the fact that the decision of the highly technical naval problems, and the control of the Navy's operations in peace time, has rested exclusively with a civilian, without previous knowledge or experience, who was also very often a politician more concerned about patronage, about distributing navy funds to favored sections, about promoting his own or his party's fortunes, than about the possibility of war, or the preparation of the navy for war. Many of the Secretaries have probably honestly believed, as did Mr. Daniels, that there would be no more wars, and have laughed at the warnings of those who knew something of history.

X

When war comes, the officers of the Navy must bear the burden and the responsibility and face the dangers of battle. But how can we expect them to fight successfully if they have not been permitted to determine the kind and number of ships necessary, if they have not been permitted to make plans for war or train the fleet for war? When war comes, we expect them to maintain a glorious tradition of victory. In time of peace we permit them to be tyrannized over by a North Carolina politician, a convinced pacifist, who consistently opposed their efforts to make the Navy fit for its mission. The experiences of 1917, the delays and unpre-

paredness then so painfully evident, should be a sufficient warning for the future.

A glance at recent history reveals significant comparisons. In 1904, the Russian fleet at Port Arthur was successfully attacked by the Japanese fleet before any formal declaration of war had been made. In 1914, the British Navy had established a complete control of the North Sea before the war was declared. Its command of the surface of the seas was never seriously threatened thereafter. Yet the German Navy, too, including its submarines, was on a war basis and ready for action four hours after the declaration of war. The superiority of the British fleet, however, made it impossible for the Germans to hope to fight a successful battle.

Sir Julian Corbett, in the first volume of his history of British naval operations in the war, makes the following comments on the situation in 1914:

"There is no doubt that the machinery for setting our forces in action had reached an ordered completeness in detail that has no parallel in history. . . . It says much for the skill and completeness with which our preparation for war had been elaborated during the past ten years that the general situation was so far secured without any recourse to a complete mobilization by the time the critical day arrived (August 1, 1914). So far as the navy was concerned everything was in order."

In the future, our only real insurance against defeat in war and national humiliation, will be the efficiency of the armed strength of the nation. The protection of our shores and the prevention of invasion will depend upon the readiness of our Navy at all times to respond to the call to battle.

Our Navy can afford us this protection if we will permit it to have an organization designed for war use, and will pay heed to the lessons of experience rather than to the empty and resounding phrases of ridiculous politicians. No navy in the world has a body of officers as intelligent, as

well trained, as devoted, as our own. No navy has more splendid traditions. But these will be of little avail if, in the future as in the past, the military activities of the Navy are subordinated to petty, personal ambitions and idiosyncrasies, or to partisan or sectional interests.

CHAPTER III

THE NAVY AND MR. DANIELS—1913–19

I

EVERY war has its aftermath. Every campaign on land or sea is refought in the published accounts and discussions of the operations. Investigations that often follow wars very frequently bring to light facts and conditions which, for obvious reasons, were suppressed and kept from public notice at the time of their occurrence. Such revelations are often of a nature to be highly disconcerting to the country concerned, and equally discreditable to certain of the leaders whose acts are called into question. But in the whole history of warfare it would be hard to find an example of more complete mismanagement of a military or naval force, or of grosser incompetency for a position of national trust in the administration of a force upon which national defence depended, than has been provided by the recent investigation of Mr. Daniels' administration of the Navy Department.

In the midst of hostilities any information concerning the mistakes of those in command would be of material advantage to the enemy. It is therefore the normal tendency to suppress all such unpleasant revelations. It is in the national interest to do so when the nation is at war. There is another kind of suppression, however, which is dangerous and which is inspired solely by desires to maintain personal reputations, which might be imperiled were the facts made known to the public. Mr. Daniels, since the conclusion of the war, has endeavoured to accomplish this kind of suppres-

sion of the real history of our naval activities in the war. Until Admiral Sims' official comments on the war became known, the Secretary of the Navy had succeeded in his purpose and the country had been completely deceived.

II

Almost from the beginning of his administration, Mr. Daniels had been very severely criticized, both in the public press and on the floors of Congress. In 1915, and in 1916, the country had been informed, from sources whose reliability was beyond question, that all was not well with the Navy under the Daniels régime. It had been shown that Secretary Daniels, while posing as an ardent Democrat and pretending to administer the Navy on democratic lines, was, in reality, a small minded despot, bigoted and narrow in his views, and unrelenting in the misuse of official power to punish officers of the Navy who incurred his official disapproval by not humbly setting their minds to run along with his. The country had looked upon Mr. Daniels at that time with tolerant contempt. The American public, with its invariable good humour, laughed at our Pinaforesque Secretary, "Sir Josephus, N. C. B.," as Colonel Harvey dubbed him in 1915, and failed to appreciate the consequences which would result from enforcing upon the Navy the Daniels policies.

Such was the situation which prevailed until the time of our entry into the war. The country's insistence upon preparedness throughout the previous year, had led to Congressional action. The very able and effective campaign of the Navy League, the hearings before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, and the testimony of such witnesses as Admiral Fiske, Admiral Winslow, and Admiral Sims had shown the country that the Navy was not prepared for war and that, as Admiral Knight explained in a letter written at

this time, the Navy Department had failed to make any provision for war in its plans and policies. Congress, in 1916, had adopted the first constructive building program which the navy had ever had, in its endeavour to restore our Navy to its relative position of strength as compared with the navies of the other chief maritime powers. At the same time, Congress had taken steps to remedy the lamentable shortness of men by increasing the authorized personnel strength of the Navy. Admiral Fiske had succeeded in 1915, against the opposition of the Secretary, in getting Congress to create the office of Chief of Naval Operations, and thus to provide the Navy with an organization that might be expected to function under war conditions. This step was made possible largely by the previous activities of the Navy League and its insistence on the necessity for an efficient organization of the Navy Department. The Navy League as a body and its individual members, such as Col. R. M. Thompson, himself a graduate of Annapolis, and Col. Henry Breckinridge, were able to exert a continually greater influence in and out of Congress. The way had therefore been prepared for the action Congress took at the instance of Admiral Fiske. During 1916, then, Congress and the country were led to believe, as a result of these measures, that the Navy was being made ready for war.

III

Then came the war itself, and automatically the curtain was dropped, so far as the public was concerned, over the activities of the Navy Department. One of Mr. Daniels' first acts, on assuming office in 1913, had been to issue orders in the Navy Department that henceforth all public statements would be issued by his office. After war began, this order was more rigidly enforced than ever before. The country knew only what Mr. Daniels wanted it to know of what was

going on,— and surely Mr. Daniels was painting a picture roseate enough for even the most belligerent citizen. Day after day a flood of notices poured out from the Navy Department of all the things that the Navy had done, was doing and was going to do. From the day that we declared war, one would have imagined, from Mr. Daniels' official statements, that the whole of the Navy at once, ipso facto, was transformed to a war basis; that automatically all vessels of the Navy were mobilized; that well-thought out and carefully prepared war plans were immediately put into effect; that the maximum of co-operation was given immediately to the Allies. In fact Mr. Daniels publicly stated all this and more, not only at the time but in his later official reports to the President. In his annual report for 1917, for example, Mr. Daniels said, under the heading " We Are Ready Now ":

" During peaceful years the navy has been quietly but steadily perfecting itself to meet the time of war. How adequate was the preparation, how efficient its personnel, how competent its machinery to carry on the multitudinous activities of war time could only be surmised and estimated. Now the hour for which it has been preparing has arrived.

" The declaration of war found many naval dispositions already made in anticipation of possible developments. No ships had been sent abroad, but when we began to arm merchant ships a distinguished officer with a small staff was on the other side of the Atlantic available for consultation as to general operations, and ready to take charge of any force to be sent."

IV

In spite of all these optimistic assurances from the Secretary of the Navy as to what American war vessels were doing, the country waited in vain for some visible indication of American naval operations; but a cloud of mystery had descended over the whole of our war activities. The public assumed that this was only right and proper and that under

the cloud the great American republic was moving immediately, energetically and effectively to throw the weight of its might in manpower, in material resources and in military and naval strength against the Germans. Weeks passed and still no news came. People began to wonder what our mighty fleet, of which Mr. Daniels was speaking so vainly and so vaguely, was really doing. Then six weeks after war began, the country was informed that our destroyers were operating in the war zone. It was not known that only six destroyers were then overseas. Little was made public as to the disposition which had been made of our other forces. News came from time to time of additional naval vessels operating in different parts of the war zone. In July, 1917, the country was informed that American troops had been successfully landed in Europe under the escort of the American Navy. The newspapers related blood-curdling and official tales of desperate battles with flocks of submarines, through which the transports and the destroyers plowed on their way to France. Our people thrilled with pride when Mr. Daniels told them how hopelessly ineffective were all the German submarines against the American naval forces.

The months passed. The losses of merchant ships through submarine attacks diminished. The German U-boats seemed impotent in their efforts to interfere with the transport of American troops abroad. The German naval effort seemed to have been completely checkmated. The spring of 1918 came and with it the serious hours of crisis following the German offensive, when the Allied cause seemed to tremble in the balance. Then the country heard more and more of the magnificent effectiveness of the Navy abroad. Soon 300,000 men a month were being transported to France, a large percentage of these on vessels manned and operated by the Navy, and convoyed in the war zone by American naval vessels. The country heard of American battleships forming a part of the Grand Fleet, ready to engage the German

High Seas Fleet if it should ever again attempt to challenge the Allied command of the seas. There came also news of a tremendous new feat in naval warfare — of the closing of the whole of the North Sea by a gigantic mine barrier conceived and carried out largely by the American Navy. One read of the Navy's 14-inch guns, mounted on railway carriages, bombarding the German lines of communication at a range of 30 miles. More and more was heard of the success of the convoy system and of the work of our submarines overseas, of our naval aviation and of its enormous increase. The story was one calculated to fill every citizen with pride in the achievements of the Navy.

In the first year of the war, disconcerting stories had come out as to conditions in the War Department. There had been a Senate investigation which had brought out many facts extremely damaging to the War Department and its methods; but the House Naval Committee, which reviewed the activities of the Navy at the end of 1917, gave the Navy a clean bill of health; everything was perfect with Mr. Daniels' fleet, so went the report.

V

As the country heard these stories of the navy's achievements, they remembered with amazement the stories they had heard before the war of the incompetence of the Navy's head, of his failure to take any steps looking to preparedness and of his general incapacity for an office requiring administrative ability, sincerity of purpose, and real understanding. The record of the navy in the war was looked upon as a complete vindication of Mr. Josephus Daniels. Everybody said to everybody else that Mr. Daniels had done very splendidly indeed. Amid all of the scandals that accompanied our war effort, hardly a whisper was attached to the Navy Department. It seemed to have stood out as a model of efficiency and readiness. Prominent and well-informed

papers throughout the country published editorials commenting approvingly upon the magnificent way in which Mr. Daniels and his Navy Department had stood the acid-test of warfare. The Creel Bureau released many glowing stories of the complete success and awe-inspiring efficiency which attended the war activities of Mr. Daniels. The public did not remember at the moment that the Public Information Committee, of which Mr. Creel was the voice, had as its members Mr. Josephus Daniels and Mr. Newton Baker, or otherwise some mild suspicion might have arisen, even then, as to the credibility of the stories that were being officially disseminated.

VI

In 1918, Mr. Daniels' secretary, Mr. J. W. Jenkins, in writing an introduction to the Secretary's volume of war speeches, gave a description of the great Josephus that reads like a burlesque when viewed in the light of what really happened. Witness, for example, the following expressions:

"'Full speed ahead!' has been the signal of the Navy from the moment we entered the war. When the call came, it was ready. The plans had all been prepared in advance, and it required only an order to mobilize the fleet. No change whatever was required in the organization. . . . During this momentous period Secretary Daniels has been fortunate in having loyal and capable counsellors . . . of his own selection. Mr. Daniels trusts them, he has every confidence in them, but, at the same time, he has his own ideas and sees that they are carried out. And he insists on knowing all that is being done. This involves a vast amount of detail . . . but it enables him to know everything that is going on. . . .

"In the rush of war work . . . some seeming impossibilities were accomplished. . . . The whole establishment set out to break records in every line . . . and the Secretary was in the midst of it all, commending the leaders, stirring up the laggards, and keeping all moving like the coach at a foot-ball game. . . .

It was a strenuous striving . . . but Mr. Daniels enjoyed it and thrived under the strain. . . .

"From the moment hostilities appeared inevitable, Mr. Daniels threw all his energies into preparation. . . . Naval vessels had been put in readiness, munitions stored, supply ships were ready to sail. When a state of war with Germany was proclaimed on April 6th, the Fleet was mobilized without an hour's delay. . . . A vigorous aggressive policy was adopted. The American Navy decided not to wait for the submarines but to 'go after' them. Orders were immediately issued to equip a flotilla (sic!) of destroyers for foreign service. . . . This force in European waters was constantly increased, every type of boat . . . being sent over. A division of American battleships was sent to operate with the British Grand Fleet (N. B. in December, 1917); submarines were dispatched (N. B. in January, 1918); subchasers were sent over in a steady stream (N. B. after June 1, 1918). . . ."

". . . This was characteristic of Mr. Daniels' policy in prosecuting the war. He never wavered for an instant in the main objects. Adopting the President's policy of 'Force, force to the utmost' (N. B. this policy was not announced until April, 1918), he protested against fixing any definite number of men we should send to France. . . . In October, 1918, he refused . . . to discuss arrangements for peace, saying 'It is not my business to talk peace or think of peace, until the Central Powers are defeated and have laid down their arms. It is my business and the business of the Navy to devote every thought and energy to winning the war.'"

Comment is superfluous.

Yet, in 1918, the American people were so little informed of conditions in the Navy that they could read such hyperbolic praise of Mr. Daniels without derisive laughter!

VII

It seemed only natural that anything American should be efficient and well-done. The people were, therefore, more than willing to accept the stories of the efficiency of the Navy

Department, especially as they had so many convincing and indisputable proofs of the splendid efficiency of the Navy personnel. They knew that our destroyers had shown themselves the equal, if not the superior, of those of any of the Allies. They knew that our battleships had very quickly taken their positions at the wing of the Grand Fleet's battle line and had shown an efficiency which British officers freely and frankly commented upon. They knew that our naval aviators abroad were showing an aptitude for their duty, a courage and an endurance, of which any nation might well be proud. They knew that in the Northern Mine Barrage a project of naval warfare was being carried out that stood without precedent in naval annals. Knowing these things of the Navy, and of the achievements of its personnel overseas, they were quite willing to accept Mr. Daniels' own estimate of his own services, and to believe his statements as to the degree of preparedness with which the Navy had entered the war; and as to the effectiveness of the organization by which it was administered throughout the war.

VIII

Then came the armistice — the complete victory of the Allies over an utterly crushed and humiliated Germany. Without firing a shot, the German High Seas Fleet surrendered. The German submarines likewise were surrendered. No more complete naval victory is on record. Such a happy outcome of the war naturally disposed everybody to regard with complacency the whole of our war activities. Mistakes, costly delays, were forgotten before the outstanding fact of victory. The country was proud to know that its Navy had upheld its country's laurels abroad and that, in its commander overseas, Admiral William S. Sims, it possessed a man to whom all of the Allied navies had looked, with respect and admiration, for counsel and criticism.

This feeling was confirmed by the victory speeches of Mr. Daniels. With bland complacency, he told the country of the great deeds which he and his Navy had performed. On December 1, 1918, in his official report to the President of the United States, he said:

"Before the President went before Congress on the 2d day of April, 1917, and delivered his epoch-making message, which stirred the hearts of all patriots, and in the climax said, 'America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured; God helping her, she can do no other,' *the Navy from stem to stern had been made ready to the fullest extent possible for any eventuality.*"

In this same report the Secretary went on to describe the work done by the Navy in the war, in words which are especially significant in view of recent developments:

Teamwork at Home and Abroad

"Teamwork has been the Navy's slogan for five years, and its perfect operation has given proof of the wisdom of the insistence upon the whole organization working in harmony and with a common spirit. Thoroughly imbued with this principle in time of peace, the Navy, during the great war, has given a shining demonstration of its capacity for the teamwork so essential to victory.

"Throughout its enormous expansion since the beginning of the war, the enlarged naval force has kept this vital factor always in mind. The Navy at home has shown its capacity for teamwork in co-operating with the Army, the War Industries Board, and the many other governmental activities already established and the new ones wisely created for the successful prosecution of the war. Abroad, the American Navy has given a demonstration, which can be characterized only as wonderful, of its readiness to join with our associates in teamwork for the common end and the common good. In the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Adriatic; with England, with France,

with Japan, with Italy, and all allied nations, the United States Navy has co-operated without friction, looking always to the end to be attained, and has won the warmest encomiums and appreciation from our associates.

"The American officers and men on our battleships on first joining the Grand Fleet of Great Britain were welcomed so cordially and worked so unceasingly that, becoming a part of a great homogeneous fleet, they have given the best illustration of the same teamwork between nations which had been established between different agencies in our Navy. American destroyers and American submarines and other American craft have operated side by side and interchangeably with similar vessels of the nations with whom we are associated in this war. Three thousand miles from home, sea patrol and air forces of the United States Navy have done much coast defence and anti-submarine work in England and France and Italy, on the Mediterranean and in the Azores, in the closest co-operation with the allied forces.

"Much of the above could not have been accomplished at all, and none of it could have been accomplished so well, had not the American Navy, from top to bottom, fully appreciated the fact that in war teamwork is absolutely necessary, and individual prejudices and ambitions, if they exist, must be sacrificed and subordinated for a common end in a common cause.

Every Vestige of Friction Removed

"Going back in the past, *we find that apparently there have been times when a Secretary of the Navy seemed to find friction and lack of co-operation among the officers around him.* If that spirit ever existed in the United States Navy, I can state with confidence and pride that there is now no vestige of it, and I firmly believe, from my experience, not only during the last year but during the five years preceding, it will never return. The present admirable organization of the Navy, proven in the months of trial, is one which peculiarly requires teamwork, and, given this, is particularly capable of producing results. The teamwork has been there and results have been produced.

"Of course as time goes on changes in any organization become desirable and should be made. Examination of reports of vari-

ous Secretaries of the Navy, extending back to the dim past, shows nearly every year complaints of the organization they were compelled to operate and more or less radical recommendations for change.

"The present departmental organization has stood the greatest strain to which the Navy Department has ever been exposed and is essentially sound. It can and will be improved in detail as necessity arises.

A Truly American Organization

"For years there was a persistent and insistent demand on the part of a small element of the Navy and some well-meaning citizens interesting themselves in naval matters for a naval organization labeled "General Staff" of the "made in Germany" pattern. This pattern has not worn well, and it is observed that the "made in America" pattern of the United States Navy seems to be appreciated now not only in America but in some of the nations associated with us."

IX

Such then was Mr. Daniels' official account of the services of his department in the war. Of course, every naval officer, and many other well-informed people, realized how totally false was the impression which Mr. Daniels had given. They knew that, intentionally or otherwise, he was deceiving the people of the country as to what had been happening during the war, just as completely as he had deceived them previous to the war, with regard to the Navy's preparedness. They knew of the many and grievous mistakes, and of the fatal delays, that had characterized the early months of our participation in the war. They knew that the achievements which our Navy had won were largely accomplished in spite of Mr. Daniels and not because of him. Nevertheless there was no disposition to criticize so long as it was felt that the Navy's interests were not being damaged by the misrepresentations of its official head.

But almost immediately after the armistice the Navy began to disintegrate. Its personnel was demobilized so rapidly that within a year not half a dozen vessels of the fleets retained a vestige of their war efficiency. Soon the Navy learned that Mr. Daniels was continuing the same policies and methods which he had inflicted upon the Navy since 1913. The morale of the Navy rapidly declined. By the end of 1919 the officers realized that the Navy was helpless as a fighting force; that neither one of its great fleets could go to sea and fire a complete salvo from its big guns without disastrous consequences. The number of trained enlisted men competent to perform their duties, who remained in the Navy, was so small as to render the condition of the Navy more than pitiable. Yet Mr. Daniels, in his report for 1919 to the President, gave a completely inaccurate account. This new manifestation of Mr. Daniels' apparently inherent tendency to misrepresentation seemed the last straw. The following quotation will illustrate the kind of misrepresentation which made the Navy believe that the situation was hopeless:

"In the present year, demobilization has claimed attention; but the task has been not merely to demobilize but to do this without disorganizing. It was not a question of untying a knot that has been successfully tied, or of undoing what has been victoriously done. It was rather a question of reshaping, rebuilding, realigning, and without the sacrifice of national spirit, unity, or force. Many new lessons have been learned, and these have been embodied in the new Navy. Experience, intelligently interpreted, is always the best teacher, and this is especially true when the experience has been spread over so great a stretch of time and space as was the case in the World War.

"Two fundamental principles have been constantly borne in mind:

"(1) There must be and there has been no loss of adaptability to new and unexpected issues. The readiness to hit and to hit hard, which won the plaudits of our Allies at the very outset,

has been preserved in every detail of change and readjustment. The Navy is returning to a peace basis, but it is conserving the power that enabled it and will again enable it to meet with unweakened sinews any crisis that may arise. Security for the future, though an uncertain future, has not for a moment been lost sight of.

" (2) There must be and there has been no loss of symmetry or wholeness in the naval organization. A reduced personnel has not been allowed to mean fragmentariness or disproportion in whole or in part. As a vast machine, as a national organism, as a complex of interacting agencies, the Navy is in form and spirit a unit, not a fraction.

" Though demobilization has returned over 400,000 men from military to civilian pursuits, there are now in the Navy more than twice as many enlisted men as there were on January 1, 1917. Both the Navy and Marine Corps are at present below their authorized strength, but an active and successful recruiting campaign has been launched, and the time is not far distant when the attractions of Navy life will secure the full complements desired. Those in training and afloat are sufficient to man all dreadnaughts and modern destroyers, and the 400,000 men given naval training in war provide a naval reserve of fit and experienced men upon which the country can call in any emergency. This is an asset not before possessed in this decade and one which gives assurance until the youths coming into the service are skilled in all the callings that make up good seamen.

" The United States Navy emerged from the war incomparably stronger and more powerful than ever before — second only to that of Great Britain and far in advance of any other foreign navy, in ships, in men, and every element of strength. The organization of the fleet in two great divisions gives us ample defence in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic. With battleships in service equal to or superior to any now in commission, 6 huge battle cruisers and 12 battleships under construction, a number of them larger than any now in commission, to be armed with 16-inch guns, more powerful than any now afloat, the Navy is pressing forward to greater things, justifying, in peace as in war, the country's firm confidence in its ' first line of defence.' The great

fleets, one in the Pacific and one in the Atlantic, are powerful, well officered and manned, and give guaranty of protection and of readiness to serve our country and the world."

Every officer in the service knew that the "great fleets" in the Pacific and the Atlantic, of which Mr. Daniels spoke so complacently, were a source of weakness rather than of strength, for the reason that this division of our main force, contrary to all sound naval principles, reduced our total strength by at least fifty per cent. These two fleets in their condition of inefficiency and unpreparedness, due to lack of trained men, give us a false sense of security, at a time when our national policies and the attitude taken by our government towards foreign countries may involve the United States in new and even greater complications than those that resulted in our intervention in the Great War.

The officers of the Navy knew that in suppressing the true story of the activities of the Navy Department during the war, and in concealing the mistakes, Mr. Daniels was doing great harm both to the service and to the country. It was realized that, if the conditions existent in 1917 should be repeated in a future war — in which we should be immediately attacked by a powerful enemy, without Allies to protect us while we prepared — a great national disaster would inevitably result. Yet the Navy Department — far from endeavouring to profit by the lessons of the war, as the Secretary claimed he was doing — was, in reality, suppressing the facts, concealing the mistakes and pretending they never happened. Nothing contributed more to the feeling of hopelessness among naval officers familiar with the conditions than this attitude of Mr. Daniels.

CHAPTER IV

THE DANIELS MEDAL AWARDS

I

IN the year following the armistice, the Navy had found, to its consternation, that no real change had occurred in the spirit and methods of the Secretary. During the war, at least after the first distressing months, he had been rendered almost innocuous. Whatever was necessary, naval officers had done, if possible with the approval and consent of the Secretary, otherwise without his knowledge or against his express orders. So the war was won. The coming of peace was followed by a reassertion of the Secretary's tendencies to meddle in details, to impose his personal ideas and likings on the Navy, and to suppress the facts concerning the condition and needs of the Navy.

The inevitable result was the rapid disintegration of the morale of the Navy. In a service like the navy, morale is of paramount importance. The attitude and the actions of the head of the Navy react immediately on the spirit and mind of the whole service. In any military organization, morale, and its corollary, discipline, depend upon relations of mutual confidence and respect between all ranks. The maintenance of morale and discipline are impossible unless the service feels that it is being administered with absolute justice and impartiality, especially in the selection of men for high positions, in the infliction of punishments and in the distribution of rewards.

The officers of the Navy had, previous to the war, lost all confidence in the Navy Department, as administered by

Mr. Daniels. They knew the condition of the Navy, and they realized the enormity, and the possible consequences, of the misrepresentations of the Secretary, of his political partisanship and of his favoritism. The recurrence of these conditions in 1919 made them almost lose hope.

Captain W. V. Pratt, the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations during the war, wrote Senator Hale on May 17th, 1920, that "there can always be found a naval adviser who will advocate a plan, be it good or bad." Also, "the result of the present system is not necessarily to choose the best men, but such men as will lend themselves most readily to the views of the civilian head, be they sound or unsound." These are exactly the things that have happened in the Navy Department since 1913. The service has realized that honours and preferment went, not to the most capable or most deserving, but to the most pliant, and the most subservient, among the officers of the Navy. Nothing more destructive of morale can be imagined.

II

Such was the situation when the naval service was treated to a new and aggravated illustration of the Daniels methods. On December 1, 1919, in his annual report, Mr. Daniels published his list of "Medals of Honour, Distinguished Service Medals and Navy Crosses Awarded." The officers of the Navy studied the list with incredulity, amazement and consternation. It was found that recommendations of commanding officers had rarely been followed; that some officers recommended for lesser awards had received higher ones; that officers recommended for the highest awards had received lesser ones or none at all. Officers whose ships had been torpedoed were given the Distinguished Service Medal, while officers who had successfully attacked submarines, or who had so skilfully manœuvred their ships as to escape damage received only the Navy Cross or no award at all.

Such a policy in awarding honours for war service necessarily had the most serious effect on the already depressed morale of the Navy. As Admiral Sims later told the Senate Committee, "it was the last straw." These awards are so typical of the Daniels régime and illustrate so well the character of his activities as ruler of the Navy that they merit especial attention.

III

To understand the situation one must bear in mind the reasons for giving medals or distinctions of any kind for heroic conduct or distinguished service in war. The chief reason had always been, until Mr. Daniels' astonishing list was published, to improve the fighting spirit and the morale of the service, by recognizing success in action against the enemy and by singling out for special recognition acts of valour and heroism in battle, or service of unusual distinction. Such recognition serves, not only as an award to the individuals concerned, but also as a great stimulus to morale. It is only human that officers and men should take satisfaction in receiving recognition for their achievements, and in knowing that any heroic or distinguished service will be justly rewarded. If the awards are made impartially, they can take a natural and legitimate pride in such distinctions. Their fellows regard them with kindly envy and are stimulated in their own efforts by ambition to receive similar distinction. It is not the decoration itself — a bit of metal hung on a varicoloured ribbon — that is important. It is only a symbol. The important factor is the official recognition of heroic or distinguished service and the according to certain individuals of the right to special esteem and respect from the service.

Unless the method of awarding medals insures prompt and just recognition of meritorious acts or service, the result is disastrous to morale. When distinctions are conferred

upon individuals not fairly entitled to them, and are withheld from those whose services were known to have been more worthy of distinction, the purpose of the awards is not only defeated, but is perverted. The confidence of the service in the impartiality and fairness of its chief is shattered. Bitter feeling develops and morale is shaken. The medals and awards are cheapened, and come to be regarded as proofs, not of creditable service, but of favouritism. The receivers are suspected of obsequiousness to authority; the bestowers, of nepotism and discrimination.

IV

When we entered the war, there was no provision for any award save the Congressional Medal of Honour, reserved to award acts of unusual bravery, beyond the limits required by duty. When our forces went to Europe, they found that medals and honours were promptly awarded by the Allies for acts of heroism or for distinguished service. The Allied powers had appropriate distinctions with which to recognize every kind and degree of military achievement. Our men saw Allied officers and men alongside of them, performing service no more creditable than their own, receiving these decorations while they themselves received no recognition of any kind.

In 1917, the Allied governments proposed the award of such decorations, to officers and men of the American service, as would go to members of the Allied units serving with them, often in the same forces, as in the case of our destroyer forces based on Queenstown.

This could not be done without the consent of Congress. Admiral Sims, therefore, recommended on December 30, 1917, that

"steps be taken to obtain legislation which will permit United States naval personnel to accept decorations of foreign govern-

ments. Experience in this force demonstrates clearly that such recognition is prized as highly by our personnel as it is by the personnel of foreign services. Its effect upon morale and efficiency is marked. The mere fact that the British government has expressed a desire to award decorations to certain of our ships became known and its effect was pronounced."

Secretary Daniels, however, rejected this recommendation, and opposed any recognition by the Allies of the services of American personnel in the war zone. On September 22, 1917, he wrote the chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs "that it is the view of this department that only medals issued by our own Government should be worn by our officers and enlisted men." He opposed a joint resolution then before Congress to permit the acceptance of such medals. Again, on February 26, 1918, the Secretary wrote the chairman of the House Naval Committee that "the department wishes to inform you that it is opposed to the object of this act, i. e., the acceptance and wearing of decorations and medals presented by our Allies, and desires to express its disapproval thereof." In spite of the Secretary's opposition, such permission was granted by Congress in July, 1918. But it was not until February, 1919, that the Department recognized the action of Congress and officially permitted members of the naval service to accept such decorations.

V

No action had been taken by the Navy Department, during the war, to provide any medals or decorations for the recognition of heroism or distinguished service. It was not until February 4, 1919, three months after the armistice, that Congress passed the act providing for the award of medals in the naval service.

On March 6, 1919, the Secretary appointed a Board to review all recommendations of commanding officers and to

submit a uniform set of recommendations for awards. This board was composed of Rear Admiral Knight, who had commanded the Asiatic Fleet during the war, and of eight retired officers, none of whom had been abroad during the war or had any personal familiarity with conditions in the war zone or of the war services of the personnel of the Navy. Two of these were rear admirals of the line of the Navy, retired in 1915 and 1918; one was a rear admiral of the Civil Engineer Corps, retired in 1906; one was a captain of the Medical Corps, retired in 1911; one was a captain of the Chaplain Corps, retired in 1910; one was a captain of the Construction Corps, retired in 1910; one was a captain of the Supply Corps, retired in 1915, and the ninth was a colonel of Marines, retired in 1910.

Thus the majority of the Board were retired officers of the non-combatant branch of the Navy, who had been on the retired list for an average of nine years. Such was the board selected by Mr. Daniels to pass on the recommendations of the commanders of the fleets and forces of the Navy in the war, and to determine the awards to be given for distinguished service and for heroic acts in the war under circumstances of which the board knew nothing! Such a board was obviously in no position to revise the recommendations of the various commanders as to awards to the officers and men of their commands. It could perhaps reconcile the various lists submitted and establish a uniform standard for the award of the different medals. It had no information or experience qualifying it to alter the order of relative merit, indicated by the recommendations received from commanding officers.

VI

Instructions were sent out to the naval service early in 1919 to submit all recommendations for awards to this board. The service was not informed of any policy to be fol-

lowed in making recommendations. The board received no instructions from the Secretary, and no indication of his policy other than that contained in the letter appointing the board. In this he said:

"1. The language of the act will be strictly construed so that recognition will be awarded only for exceptional merit.

"2. The board will consider the cases of only such members of the Marine Corps as were not detached for service with the army."

According to the wording of the law, the medals of honour could be presented "to any person, who, while in the naval service of the United States, shall, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty and without detriment to the mission of his command or the command to which attached."

The distinguished service medal could be awarded to any person, "who, while in the naval service of the United States since the sixth day of April, 1917, has distinguished, or who hereafter shall distinguish, himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the government in a duty of great responsibility."

The navy cross could be awarded for "extraordinary heroism or distinguished service in the line of his profession, such heroism or service not being sufficient to justify the award of a medal of honour or a distinguished service medal."

The general distinction between the various rewards was thus specifically determined by the Act of Congress.

VII

The board began its labours on March 17, 1919, and was in session until October 31, 1919, when it was suddenly dissolved by the Secretary before it had completed its work. Many of the most important recommendations were not re-

ceived until September and October, and, in many cases, not until after the board had been dissolved. The board reviewed a total of over 4,000 recommendations of commanding officers, and submitted three reports to the Secretary, on September 23rd, October 19th and October 31st, 1919.

It was established during the senate investigation that Mr. Daniels took the reports of the board and ruthlessly revised them, according to his own fancy, in making up the list published in his annual report for 1919.

The list as drawn up by the Secretary provided for the award of 13 Medals of Honor, 156 Distinguished Service Medals and 1,451 Navy Crosses, or a total of 1,620 medals. When the records of the Board of Awards were reviewed by the Senate Committee, it was found that only 677, or or 41.5 per cent., of the Secretary's medal awards were in accord with the recommendations of commanding officers and the Board of Awards. Three hundred and one of the awards, or 18.5 per cent., were reductions from the awards recommended; 31, or 2 per cent., were higher than those recommended; and 611, or 38 per cent., were given to officers and men who had not been recommended at all for any award, either by their commanding officers or by the Board of Awards. Three-fifths of the medals awarded, therefore, represented only the personal judgment of Mr. Daniels. It is a curious illustration of his attitude toward the navy that he should have so completely disregarded the recommendations of the commanding officers, and should have paid so little heed to the board which he had himself appointed to make recommendations after a careful study of the records. Some names on their lists he struck off altogether; to some he gave higher awards than were recommended; to others lower awards. Then, to complete the picture, he proceeded to add to the list 611 names of his own choosing!

No official action more in the spirit of the First Lord in Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera "H. M. S. Pinafore"

can be imagined. "Sir Josephus, N. C. B.," intended to leave no doubt as to who was the ruler of the American Navee!

VIII

Small wonder, then, that when the list was published, there was an outburst of indignation among the officers of the navy! Many wrote to the Secretary declining to accept the medals awarded them; others went to him personally to point out the grave injustice inflicted upon the service by his awards. Most conspicuous among these protests was that of Admiral William S. Sims, long one of the ardent champions of the navy's best interests and our naval commander in European waters during the war. Admiral Sims wrote the Secretary of the Navy on December 17th, declining to accept the Distinguished Service Medal awarded him.

In his letter, Admiral Sims invited attention to certain features of the awards:

First: "This list contains a number of instances of injustice to distinguished officers, the effect of which upon the morale of the service cannot fail to be detrimental. The injustice lies not in the number of awards made, but in the fact that the awards . . . are not in accord with the relative merit of the services performed by them as indicated in my recommendations. Officers who were recommended for the highest awards appear on the list as having been accorded lower awards and vice-versa . . . it must always be impossible for a board, or any outside authority so to modify the estimate of relative merit of the services of officers . . . made by the immediate and active superior in command . . . without inflicting actual injustice. This necessarily defeats the whole object of instituting a system of awards of merit in time of war."

Second: "An example of the injustice . . . is shown by the action upon the citations for awards to the officers of my staff abroad . . . not only were the recommendations not complied

with in 13 of these 19 cases, but a number of officers in the command whose services were relatively of less importance and much less in responsibility were accorded higher awards. . . . This seems to be due to an erroneous opinion as to the relative value of services at sea and in certain vitally important positions ashore, an opinion that duty in the latter positions must necessarily be the least distinguished.

"This is so serious a misapprehension that the action of the Department in awarding distinctions should be such as to have the effect of clearly impressing upon the service . . . that the most important duty in time of war is that of planning and directing the military operations of the whole force. . . . The vital importance of successful leadership and the recognitions which should follow have no logical relation to the positions, ashore or afloat, from which such leadership must be exercised. . . . This is strikingly illustrated by the award of the Distinguished Service Medal to a considerable number of officers in positions of very little responsibility, while four of the nine rear admirals under my command . . . were accorded only the lower award of the Navy Cross."

Third: "I feel impelled to invite attention to a special class of awards which are the subject of such service condemnation and ridicule that the effect upon the present and future morale of the service must necessarily be deplorable to the last degree — namely, the Distinguished Service Medals awarded to many, if not all, of the officers who were defeated in action, or whose ships were sunk or seriously damaged by enemy submarines. . . . These are typical not only of unsuccessful actions, but of failure to injure the enemy. The victors in these cases were the German submarines. . . . No blame necessarily attaches to the commanding officers of these vessels for their failures, but on no account should they receive a special award for this lack of success. . . . The commanding officer of a vessel that is sunk by a submarine should not receive the same award as the commanding officer of a vessel which sinks a submarine. Yet it is precisely this which has been done in a number of instances."

Admiral Sims expressed the hope that the department would modify the list by recognizing properly the more de-

serving officers. The Secretary replied on December 20th, that "*No action taken by the Department has been final and the list is not complete.*"

IX

The publication of the letters from these officers created a public sensation. The Secretary's list of awards was condemned and ridiculed in all quarters. Congress began to evince an active interest.

Meanwhile, Mr. Daniels, on December 26th, 1919, apparently much concerned by the storm aroused by his action, hastily ordered the reconvening of the Board of Awards and the reconsideration of the award lists. In his order he stated:

"While approving in the main the recommendations of the Board of Awards, my examination into the subject has convinced me that there are a number of cases requiring further examination, and there have been additional recommendations. . . . I felt in going over the list that the board had been too liberal particularly as regards officers whose duty during the war was mainly or altogether on shore. I felt that reports . . . particularly as to men who had served and suffered in the war zone justified additional rewards.

"*No official approval of any list has been made.* All lists published were tentative. Last week I ordered changes made in the list as printed awarding the Distinguished Service Medal among others to Admiral Knight, Admiral Caperton and Vice Admiral Jones. I had also decided that like awards should be given to certain other officers who had rendered long and arduous service in convoys and other service afloat in the war zone. . . ."

In his annual report for 1919, the Secretary had said, under the heading "*Distinguished Service Recognized*":

"In pursuance of an act of Congress, the Navy Department was authorized to award Distinguished Service Medals and Navy

Crosses to officers and men who had rendered distinguished or conspicuous service."

Then, after quoting the act, the Secretary said:

"The full list of the medals and crosses awarded appears in Appendix I. A board, headed by Rear Admiral Knight, has given much time to the study of records, with an earnest desire to give recognition of courage and distinguished service. . . . To select those who embraced opportunity for conspicuous service and valor has been no easy task. The duty has been conscientiously performed."

Appendix I was headed:

"Medals of Honor, Distinguished Service Medals and Navy Crosses *Awarded.*"

It is rather curious that after such statements in his annual report, Secretary Daniels should have discovered, when popular attention was directed to his favouritism, that "*no official approval of any list has been made*" and that "*all lists published were tentative.*" It was at least a most unusual act to publish broadcast in his official annual report to the President a tentative list, thereby subjecting all officers and men concerned to a most embarrassing ordeal.

X

A very few days after the list of medal awards was published, as an appendix to the annual report of the Secretary of the Navy, the attention of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs had been called to the peculiarities of this list. On December 16th, the day before Admiral Sims wrote his letter declining the Distinguished Service Medal conferred upon him, Senator C. S. Page, the chairman of the Senate Committee, had written the Secretary of the Navy requesting copies of the report of the Knight board. The Secretary replied in a letter of December 19th (received by Senator Page December 24th), stating that the report was being

submitted and explaining his reasons for departing from the recommendations in making up his list of awards.

Members of both houses of Congress were greatly concerned by the action of Secretary Daniels and the indignation aroused by his list. The Senate Committee on Naval Affairs on January 5th, 1920, decided to appoint a subcommittee " to investigate the awarding of medals in the naval service." The Senate subcommittee was composed of Senators Hale, Chairman (Maine), McCormick (Illinois), Newberry (Michigan), replaced in January by Senator Poindexter (of Washington), Pittman (Nevada) and Trammell (Florida).

Hearings were begun on January 16, 1920, Admiral Sims being the first witness. The other witnesses called to testify, in the order of their appearance, were: Admiral Mayo, General Barnett (U. S. Marine Corps), Admiral Grant, Admirals Knight, Coffman and Badger of the Board of Awards, and Secretary Daniels. At the conclusion of the Secretary's testimony Admiral Sims was recalled to make a statement in reply to assertions and attacks of Mr. Daniels. The hearings on the question of medal awards were concluded on February 10, 1920, and the report of the subcommittee was published on March 7, 1920.

XI

It was apparent from the first that opinion in the naval service and in the country condemned the action of Mr. Daniels. Senator Hale, in opening the investigation, said:

" The purpose and intent of the statute was to award medals to officers and men of the navy for heroism in action and for distinguished service, and for such purposes alone. . . . It was clearly intended that the list should be beyond the reach of patronage or of political or private influence of any kind. . . .

" Following the publication of this list (of the Secretary) many protests were made about the awards and a feeling has arisen in

the country that the purpose of the act has not been followed out and that political and private influence and patronage have crept in.

"As a result the value of the medals to the recipients has been greatly diminished and the morale of the navy has to a great extent been injured."

Senator Pittman, senior Democratic member of the committee, recognized the nature of the investigation fully when he said:

"Say what you want to about the matter here, it is in the nature of a trial of the acts of the Secretary of Navy."

The great majority of naval officers agreed whole-heartedly with the criticisms of Admiral Sims. Captain R. D. Hasbrouck, one of the officers who had been awarded a medal by Mr. Daniels for circumstances connected with the loss of a ship, wrote the Secretary as follows:

"In view of my strong personal conviction of the fitness and justice of Admiral Sims' summing up of the underlying reason for the award of naval honours. . . . I request that my name be stricken from the list of awards. . . .

"I have a higher regard for Admiral Sims' views on matters affecting the morale of the naval service than those of any other officer. Concurring so unreservedly in his views I cannot, consistently and with honesty to myself, accept an honour which I personally feel is undeserved."

The *Army and Navy Journal* in its issue of January 3rd, 1920, said:

"Navy officers in Washington . . . expressed keen regrets that the controversy had been fanned into the proportions of a sensation . . . there was no question that the Secretary had only himself to blame for antagonizing the entire commissioned personnel of the navy, in the opinion of these officers, and that the effect upon navy morale would not be overcome for a long time."

An officer of over fifteen years' service in the navy in a letter published in the same issue of the *Army and Navy*

Journal expressed sentiments that were quoted as being typical of the opinion of the navy:

"Never before, during my time in the service, has anything caused more discontent and dissatisfaction among the officer personnel than the publication of the 'Navy Awards' as released by Secretary Daniels. . . . I think it is an honour not to be in the Secretary's list, as our highly thought of and much beloved Admiral Sims has so clearly shown and demonstrated. We stand back of him,— every officer who knows him or who has ever served with him. He is the greatest naval officer in the world today and knows full well what he is doing. Admiral Sims is saving the morale and the esprit de corps of our navy."

The attitude of the press, apart from the purely partisan administration papers that blindly endorse any act of the administration, is well represented by an editorial in the *New York Herald*, from which the following quotation is taken:

"It is difficult to understand what Mr. Daniels means by declaring that no official approval of any honour list has been made when an appendix to his own annual report to the President carries an unqualified roster of the officers rewarded and this has the force of a guaranteed notification to the public. . . . The attitude of Rear Admiral Sims is eminently correct and accords with the best traditions of the navy. It deserves the unstinted support of the country and will receive it despite the blandishments and attempted beguilements that are sure to follow. Had it not been for the actions of Rear Admiral Sims, Rear Admiral Hilary Jones, and Captain Raymond Hasbrouck the emasculated list might have been slipped over and, as has happened so often before, the rights and wrongs of it never have been revealed to the public. The time had fortunately come to put a stop to this practice, and let us hope it has been stopped."

XII

The naval officers who testified before the committee brought out clearly the injustice of Mr. Daniels' list of

awards. Furthermore, the reports of the Board of Awards, and the documents furnished the committee showing the recommendations of commanding officers and of the Board and the final action by the Secretary, more than confirmed all the criticisms of the naval witnesses.

The chief characteristics of Mr. Daniels' awards, as established by the investigation, were:

First: The relative order of merit in the lists of commanding officers had been arbitrarily changed by Mr. Daniels. In this way the officers who performed the most distinguished services received lesser awards than many officers favoured by Mr. Daniels, whose services had been much less meritorious.

Second: The most aggravated instance of this change in the relative merit of awards occurred in the case of flag officers commanding stations or forces, in positions of the greatest responsibility, and of officers on the staffs of the commanding admirals. Mr. Daniels ruthlessly reduced nearly all awards to staff officers. These staff officers, on whom fell the responsibility for the planning and direction of all operations, received lower awards than many commanders of single ships, given the Distinguished Service Medal by Mr. Daniels because they conducted themselves as every naval officer should after their ships had been torpedoed.

Third: Mr. Daniels followed the stated policy of awarding the Distinguished Service Medal to commanding officers of ships torpedoed by the enemy. Thus he definitely established the policy of awarding failure and honouring defeat at the hands of the enemy.

Fourth: Mr. Daniels failed to award the Distinguished Service Medal to commanding officers of ships who had met the enemy successfully, and either inflicted damage on the U-boats, or saved transports or convoys from attacks by their skill. Success against the enemy thus received a lesser award than failure.

Fifth: In accordance with his definite policy of posing as the champion of enlisted men, Mr. Daniels, of his own initiative and without any recommendations from commanding officers, awarded 15 Distinguished Service Medals and many Navy Crosses to enlisted men, whose services were much less meritorious than those

of many of the officers to whom he refused awards or gave a lesser award than he did to these enlisted men.

Sixth: Mr. Daniels violated the act of Congress by awarding the Distinguished Service Medal in at least 30 cases, or about 20 per cent. of his whole list of 156 Distinguished Service Medals, for acts of heroism. The Board of Awards clearly pointed out in the reports submitted to Mr. Daniels in 1919, that acts of heroism, however notable, could be awarded only with the Medal of Honour and the Navy Cross. Mr. Daniels altered the recommendations, regardless of the law, and picked out 30 cases, of his own choosing, of heroic conduct not in a duty of great responsibility, for the Distinguished Service Medal.

Seventh: In awarding medals to the Marine Corps, Mr. Daniels disregarded his own instructions that medals should be awarded only to those marines *not* serving with the army. He rejected practically all recommendations from the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Board of Awards, and awarded navy medals to the marines already given awards by the army, thus giving them duplicate awards. His duplication of awards included 4 Medals of Honour, 12 Distinguished Service Medals and 309 Navy Crosses, or 325 awards out of a grand total of 1620 on his list.

Eighth: In making his changes in the list of awards, Mr. Daniels was plainly actuated more by favouritism than by a desire to accord impartial justice. He singled out for the highest distinctions a number of officers closely associated with his administration. One of the medals he gave to commanding officers whose ships had been sunk by the enemy, went to his brother-in-law, another to the officer who was his personal aide. On the other hand, he had eliminated from the lists many officers whom he personally disliked because they had not been subservient to him and had fought for the best interests of the navy even against his opposition.

The reasons Mr. Daniels gave for making his changes absurdly fail to explain his list. He enunciated a number of quite sound principles. On examination of the evidence, it was shown that he himself had disregarded these prin-

ciples most flagrantly. In fact, these reasons seemed to have been uniformly formulated, after the event, in order to placate public sentiment. In endeavouring to defend his action, Mr. Daniels also made desperate efforts to becloud the issue by dragging in irrelevant charges against Admiral Sims and by trying to align other high officers of the navy against him.

XIII

A statistical analysis of the awards recommended by commanding officers and by the Board of Awards gives a rough indication of the general character of the changes and modifications made by Mr. Daniels from these recommendations.

Sixty-four and five-tenths per cent., or about two-thirds, of all awards to navy personnel represented only the personal judgment of the Secretary, while no less than 35 per cent. were added by himself to the list. At the same time half of the recommendations of the commanding officers were totally rejected and an additional 20 per cent. were changed. Only 26 per cent. of the recommendations of the commanding officers were approved and accepted.

In the case of the recommendations made by Admiral Sims for awards to the officers who served under his command in the war zone, only 37.5 per cent., or three-eighths of the total, were accepted; 37.5 per cent., or another three-eighths, were reduced; and 20 per cent. were rejected altogether and no awards made. At the same time the Secretary, on 5 per cent. of the cases, gave higher awards than those recommended by Admiral Sims. The order of relative merit, which the commanding officer at the front could alone determine, was thus disregarded.

Number of Recommendations of Commanding Officers		Number of Recommendations of Board on Reviewing Cases					Action Taken by the Secretary					
	Number	M. H.	D.S.M.	N.C.	C.L.	No Award	M.H.	D.S. M.	N.C.	C.L.	No Award	Total
Medal of Honour	12	4	2	5	...	1	5	1	4	...	2	12
D. S. M.....	600	2	180	275	65	78	..	92	311	48	149	600
Navy Cross	1,480	4	30	570	140	736	4	20	510	131	815	1,480
General	200	..	6	70	20	104	..	5	50	15	130	200
Commendatory Letter	150	..	2	10	35	103	..	2	5	30	113	150
Total Awards recommended to Board.....	2,442	10	220	930	260	1,022	9	120	880	224	1,209	2,442
Recommendations of Command'g Officers	*General* 200	12	600	1,480	150	....	12	600	1,480	150	....	2,442

Admiral Sims' Recommendations		Board's Action					Secretary's Action					
	Number	M. H.	D.S.M.	N.C.	C.L.	No Award	M.H.	D.S. M.	N.C.	C.L.	No Award	Total
Medal of Honour	3	..	2	1	...	....	..	2	1	...	....	3
D. S. M.....	75	..	28	40	7	....	..	17	48	6	4	75
Navy Cross	190	..	13	108	46	23	..	14	85	41	50	190
Total	268	..	43	149	53	23	..	33	134	47	54	268
Ad. Sims' Recommendations..	268	3	75	190	...	.....	3	75	190	...	....	268

ACTION OF SECRETARY ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARD

Board's Recommendations		Secretary's Awards					
	Number	M.H.	D.S.M.	N.C.	C.L.	Nothing	Total
Medal of Honour	10	7	2	1	0	0	10
D. S. M.....	220	1	86	108	0	25	220
Navy Cross	930	1	24	659	0	246	930
Commendatory Letter	260	0	4	10	224	22	260
Nothing	761	4	36	571	150	...	761
Total	2181	13	152	1349	374	293	2181

AWARDS BY SECRETARY OF NAVY INDEPENDENTLY AND ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE

	M. H.	D.S.M	N.C.	C.L.	No Award	Total	Total Cases
Enlisted Men (Navy)	..	12	154	100	....	266	....
Officers (Navy).	..	12	108	50	....	170	....
Marines (with Army)	4	12	309	...	....	325	....
Total	4	36	571	150	....	761	....
Total Awards by Secty. of Navy	13	156	1,451	374	1,209	1,994	3,203

The following percentage tables may serve to make these rather complicated figures more intelligible:

I. ANALYSIS OF AWARDS MADE BY SECRETARY

	Per Cent.	Number of Medals	Number of Awards	Per Cent.
As recommended by officers and by Board.....	41.5	677	707	35.5
Reduced Awards	18.5	301	495	25.
Increased Awards	2.	31	31	1.5
Mr. Daniels' independent action	38.	611	761	38.
Total	100.	1,620	1,994	100.
Made or modified by Mr. Daniels	58.5	943	1,287	64.5

II. ACTION TAKEN ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

	Action by Board of Awards		Action by Secretary	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Accepted	789	32.	637	26.
Reduced	487	20.	495	20.25
Increased	48	2.	31	1.25
Decided	96	4.	70	3.
Rejected totally...	1022	42.	1209	49.5
Totals	2442	100.	2442	100.

III. ACTION ON ADMIRAL SIMS' RECOMMENDATIONS

	Board's Recommendations		Secretary's Action	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Accepted	136	51.	102	37.5
Reduced	96	36.	102	37.5
Increased	13	4.5	14	5.
Rejected — No Award	23	8.5	54	20.
Totals	268	100.	268	100.

IV. SECRETARY'S ACTION ON BOARD'S REPORT

	D.S.M.		Navy Crosses		Total Awards	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Accepted	86	39.	659	70.5	969	68.
Reduced	108	49.	...	....	112	8.
Increased	1	0.5	24	2.5	26	2.
Rejected	25	11.5	247	27.	313	22.
Total	220	100.	930	100.	1,420	100.

XIV

The protests of distinguished officers of the Navy against Mr. Daniels' medal awards, and the evidence brought out in the Senate investigation, did much to check the process of demoralization in the naval service. Public attention was called in an emphatic way to conditions in the Navy and to the characteristics of its Secretary. Mr. Daniels' methods were publicly exposed and condemned in no uncertain terms by some of the men most honoured and esteemed in the service. It gave cheer to the Navy to realize that it still had champions, willing to defend its interests even

against the political omnipotence and unscrupulous injustice of the departmental head.

Mr. Daniels stood convicted before the public, after the medal awards investigation, not only of injustice and favouritism, but of ridiculous incapacity. Almost at once the promising boom of the Secretary for the presidential nomination exploded. As late as November, 1919, he had been regarded even by well-informed people, and by leading newspapers as one of the bright spots of the administration. In January, he had again become the object of ridicule and contempt which he had been in 1915 and 1916.

Mr. Daniels evidently recognized how damaging his actions would seem, if full information were given to the public. He used every available means to escape the onus and to dodge the responsibility of his actions. He hurriedly disclaimed the list of awards, published in his annual report as officially approved, with the statement that it was only a tentative list. He sought to allay public irritation by summoning into session again the Knight Board of Awards, and by instructing it to reconsider all recommendations, including the 611 he had himself added to the list.

In explaining his reasons for ruthlessly changing or rejecting two-thirds of the recommendations made to him, he endeavoured to find the most plausible excuses. The only fault to be found with these, as has already been indicated, is that they do not apply, in most cases, to his own actions. In fact, his list of awards was usually at variance with the "policies" he improvised after the storm had descended upon him.

It was obvious very early in the investigation that Mr. Daniels could not really meet the issues. Every naval officer of any standing condemned his medal awards as unjust and harmful to the Navy. The only justification for his action seemed to be the unquestioned fact that he had had the power to grant all medals, and that he had exercised this

power to suit himself. He wrote Senator Page on December 19, 1919, that:

"The award of medals is a function of the executive branch of the Government and is at the discretion of the President.

"Furthermore, I desire to emphasize the fact that this Board of Awards was established by my order and its recommendations were only for the information of the Secretary of the Navy. This Board, therefore, did not have any statutory authority, its recommendations were not final, and the executive was authorized to act as if no board had been constituted. There is nothing to prevent the Secretary of the Navy departing from the recommendations of this board, when in his opinion this should be done."

Mr. Daniels' attitude savours strongly of the old notion of royal prerogative, expressed in such phrases as "l'etat, c'est moi" and "the King can do no wrong." He had power. He had exercised it. What right had any one to criticize?

He has never realized that in a democratic community the exercise of power implies responsibility. He, upon whom we confer authority, does not become thereby our master, but our servant. If he misuses his power he violates a public trust. This Mr. Daniels has done, grossly and flagrantly for over seven years.

He has kept the public, during that time, in ignorance of his tyranny because the Navy may not address the nation save through its Secretary. He has not only all power over the Navy, but his is its only official voice. That voice for over seven years has misrepresented conditions in the Navy, has deceived the country and Congress and, by its influence on the press and public opinion, has concealed from public notice the nightmare which his régime has inflicted upon the Navy.

XV

In accordance with his usual habits, the Secretary, on finding himself confronted with the public disclosure of his own action, endeavoured to becloud the issues by attacking his critics. With ruthless disregard of truth, and shameless misuse of confidential and personal reports and letters, he sought to discredit Admiral Sims. His interjection of such attacks and insinuations was not intended in any way to meet the criticisms of his official actions; but was designed purely and simply to damage the officers of the Navy who opposed him and to stir up feuds within the Navy itself, under cover of which he might hope to escape.

Mr. Daniels, in his testimony, attempted to create feeling against Admiral Sims by making public confidential papers. Admiral Sims, in a personal letter to the Secretary on January 12th, 1919, had strongly advised against the appointment of Wilson to the command of the Atlantic Fleet. Wilson was not a War College graduate, he had not been a loyal subordinate to Sims in his duty abroad and Admiral Sims felt that his temper and character made his choice inadvisable. The Secretary read this personal letter into his testimony. In the letter Sims had named eight officers whom he thought better fitted to command the fleet than Wilson. Not content with publishing the letter, Mr. Daniels had it sent out by navy radio to all ships of the fleet. It was posted on bulletin boards and thus every officer and man in the fleet could read Admiral Sims' frank, personal and unfavourable opinion of their Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Wilson.

Admiral Sims in commenting on this action of the Secretary on March 9th, before the Senate Committee said:

"In this connection, I would invite attention to what appears to be a campaign of deliberate propaganda (at least, so it is believed to be by the naval service) aimed at prejudicing this case

by wholly irrelevant subjects prior to its investigation by this committee.

" To take but one example. In the testimony before this committee on awards, it was seen fit to introduce personal correspondence of mine on a subject quite remote from that issue, and, further, with a full knowledge of the publicity which would attend it. Its introduction was, of course, camouflaged under the implication that thereby my recommendations on awards were to be in some way invalidated.

" My views as to who should have been the commander of the Atlantic fleet at that time or, in fact, my differences with Admiral Wilson, regardless of their individual merit, had the most remote, if any, bearing on that case or this.

" If the methods of making awards did not affect the morale of the Navy this instance certainly was calculated to do so. Not content with the publicity which was sure to follow in the press and to make the case infinitely worse, it was also broadcasted by the Navy Radio Press through high powered wireless to every ship and every naval station in the service.

" Imagine the effect upon the discipline of the fleet when this Government wireless announcement was posted on every bulletin board for the information of every man, from officers to the last apprentice boy, giving information — whether true or not — casting reflections on the ability of their leader, the commander-in-chief of the fleet; information, which through its method of dissemination, actually made invidious comparisons between many higher officers of the Navy.

" This was a manifest outrage against the efficiency of the fleet, against Admiral Wilson himself, as well as against the proper investigation of the important issues of national safety before this committee."

Mr. Daniels further violated the canons of confidence, decency and good taste in making public confidential " fitness reports " on Admiral Wilson. Every six months, such a report is made out for every officer in the Navy by his immediate superior. These are intended only for the records of the Department, for use in connection with selections for

promotion and for commands; containing as they do, the most confidential reports on the officers of the Navy, their secrecy is carefully guarded in the naval service. Yet Mr. Daniels read to the committee, and thus made public, a series of these reports on Admiral Wilson, submitted in 1917 and 1918 by Admirals Sims and Mayo.

He not only did gross injustice to Admiral Wilson, to Admiral Sims and to the Navy by this publication of extremely confidential official reports, but also tried to misrepresent the character of the reports, as the following testimony will show:

"*The Chairman:* Are these reports in connection with the awards?

"*Secretary Daniels:* *Absolutely, of course.*

"*The Chairman:* Or are they just reports to the department?

"*Secretary Daniels:* These reports are in connection with the fact that Admiral Sims recommended every other admiral who was on the other side. . . .

"*The Chairman:* I understand that, I mean, were these reports made to you so that you could make up your awards or were they in connection with the details of the routine of the department?

"*Secretary Daniels:* They were made for my information as to awards and everything else.

"*The Chairman:* And especially the assigning of officers to duty?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Everything: any condition, as to awards they have an important bearing. . . .

"*The Chairman:* They were not in response to a request for information especially as to awards?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Not in response to that but as essential for making the awards." (Hearings on Awards, p. 502.)

This dialogue is an excellent illustration of the method of quibbling evasion and misrepresentation in which Mr. Daniels has become so adept through long practice.

It should be unnecessary to add that these fitness reports had no possible connection with the medal awards. They were not consulted by the Board of Awards in making up its recommendations. Nor did Mr. Daniels himself refer to them except when he wanted to use them to damage his critics.

XVI

The other attacks by Mr. Daniels on Admiral Sims were of a similar character. He said, for example, that "the position of Rear Admiral Sims in placing shore duty above sea duty in the danger zone is no doubt influenced by his own record. During the last 25 years he has served about 16 years on shore duty and about 9 years on sea duty." ("Hearings on Awards," p. 504.)

The Secretary tried to make it appear that Sims was a "shore-going admiral," by selecting for comment the last 25 years of Admiral Sims' naval career, when, by the action of his superiors, he was employed on shore on many important assignments; such as Naval Attaché at Paris, during the Spanish War, when he rendered very important service; and as Inspector of Target Practice in the Navy Department, in which position he was responsible for introducing revolutionary improvements in naval gunnery. A false impression was intentionally conveyed by the Secretary's statement, as it was headlined by the press; for it was made to appear that these 25 years were the total of Sims' naval experience, and that he served comparatively little at sea. As a matter of fact in the 18 years of his service prior to 1895, the point where the Secretary's figures began, practically all of his service had been at sea.

The facts were quite different from the Secretary's representation of them; on February 10, 1920, the *Army and Navy Journal* called attention to this in the following article:

"This (the Secretary's statement) is a very incomplete statement of Admiral Sims' sea and shore service. The official Navy Register for January 1, 1917, which is the last register which specifies the 'total sea service and other duty' of officers in all grades since they entered the service, gives the total sea service of Rear Admiral Sims on the above date as 22 years and 9 months and for shore and other duty 15 years and 10 months.

"Of the thirty rear admirals on the list, the Navy Register shows that all but one performed more duty ashore than Admiral Sims. His total sea service on January 1, 1917, was exceeded by only ten rear admirals among the thirty on the list, and only 4 of the 10 rear admirals had more than one year's service in excess of Rear Admiral Sims."

The *Navy Register* of January 1, 1920, shows that Admiral Sims had had 24 years and 8 months sea duty and 18 years and 10 months shore duty in a total service of 43 years and 6 months. Of the 69 admirals on the list only 5 had had more sea service than Sims; and of the 32 admirals appointed prior to 1918 all but six had had more shore service than he.

XVII

The sub-committee of the Senate made its reports on the medal awards hearings on March 7, 1920. The two Democratic members each submitted a minority report perfunctorily whitewashing Mr. Daniels. The three Republican members signed the majority report.

This majority report reviewed the circumstances under which the awards were made and strongly condemned the action of the Secretary of the Navy.

It was pointed out:

First: That the Secretary failed to announce any policy defining the character of services to be awarded by each of the awards authorized. The officers thus had no interpretation of the act to guide them in making recommendations. "It is the belief of the sub-committee that had such a policy been announced fewer

changes would have been necessitated in making up the list of awards."

Second: "The sub-committee finds that in making the awards no attempt was made to ascertain from the officers making the recommendations the relative merit of the cases recommended, and that the question of relative merit was not considered as it should have been. This the sub-committee regards as most unfortunate. It is of the opinion that the commanding officer of a ship is best qualified to pronounce upon the relative merits of the officers and men on his ship; that the admiral of a fleet is best qualified to judge of the relative merits of the ship commanders under him and also of the members of his staff . . . and that the same principle applies . . . throughout the navy. Had such a policy prevailed in the granting of awards . . . the men most entitled to awards would have received them, and if it had been found necessary to cut down the number to receive awards the least deserving men would have been the ones left out."

Third: "The sub-committee is of the opinion that the failure to employ some such system in making awards has been hurtful to the morale of the navy and has to a certain extent depreciated the value of the awards made."

Fourth: "The sub-committee cannot too strongly condemn the practice of giving awards to commanding officers in the navy who have lost their ships unless in such cases they shall have shown such marked heroism, or such signally distinguished service as shall have made them eligible for awards in spite of the loss of their ships. . . . Instead of the loss of their ships being taken as an opportunity where an award may be given, it is an obstacle, though not necessarily an insurmountable obstacle in the way of an award. . . . The sub-committee . . . does not believe that the Secretary did require of these men (who lost their ships) a sufficient degree of distinguished service or of heroism to warrant the awards given them in some of the cases contained in his report for the year 1919, and it further believes that the Secretary has been more zealous in furthering the interests of commanders who have lost their ships than of other commanders who, instead of losing their ships, have destroyed or damaged the ships of the enemy.

"The sub-committee is therefore firmly of the opinion that the policy laid down by the Secretary of the Navy in regard to awards to commanders who have lost their ships . . . will be detrimental to the United States Navy."

Fifth: "The sub-committee further believes that in making final awards . . . the best interests of the navy will be consulted by the Secretary of the Navy if he follows the recommendations of the Board of Awards. . . . It hopes the Board of Awards will be given full discretion to change or continue any of its former recommendations according to the latest evidence . . . and that the Board will not be bound by the findings published in the report of the Secretary of the Navy for the year 1919."

XVIII

Until two years after the Armistice, the only officer or man of the United States Navy who had received any recognition from the Navy Department for heroism or distinguished service during the war was Admiral W. S. Benson, Mr. Daniels' Chief of Naval Operations.

The Knight Board of Awards was in session for its second review of the recommendation for awards, from January to June 30, 1920. In accordance with instructions it went over all new evidence and submitted its report at the end of April.

The Board ignored Mr. Daniels' awards and changes and adhered to its former recommendations, with some few modifications and many additions based on later information. The Board's last report is a further condemnation of Mr. Daniels' awards. It serves to explain why the report is held back and why no action was taken on it until after the Presidential election.

The list of awards finally announced by the Secretary, for distribution on Armistice Day, 1920, reveals a total disregard by the Secretary of the report of the Senate Committee, of the practically unanimous opinion of the Naval

Service, and of the best interests of the Navy. He has again changed the Board's report and awarded Distinguished Service Medals to the Commanders of ships sunk by German submarines while awarding only a Navy Cross to officers who fought successful actions. He has reduced awards recommended, in a number of cases, to officers not in his good graces. In fact only a score of changes were made in the list published in 1919, although some hundreds of new names were added to the list. It is not surprising that he waited until after the election to perpetrate this further offence against the traditions and morale of the United States Navy.

The medal awards investigation has thrown exceedingly illuminating light on Mr. Daniels' administration. It reveals his tendencies, and exposes his methods in a concrete and definite way.

CHAPTER V

ADMIRAL SIMS' LETTER ON "CERTAIN NAVAL LESSONS OF THE GREAT WAR"

I

THE medal awards investigation had hardly begun when a new and much more significant issue arose. The whole of the war activities of the Navy Department, and the policies and methods put into force by Mr. Daniels since 1913, were called into question. Information of a most startling character was made public.

Until January, 1920, Mr. Daniels, and the Navy Department, had made no effort to review the operations of the war with the purpose of ascertaining such errors and mistakes as might have been committed, and of taking into account the lessons of the war. That the errors had been many and grievous was generally recognized and admitted in the naval service. Mr. Daniels, however, had ignored or denied the possibility of such errors. The country had been led to believe that his activities had been 100 per cent. perfect. So thoroughly had the officers of the Navy been muzzled that it seemed likely, not only that the disastrous failures of Daniels would escape notice, but that his policies and methods would actually be considered by the public as responsible for the undoubted success of the Navy in the final period of the war.

During the war, and on several later occasions, Admiral Sims had invited the attention of the department to strategical and administrative mistakes that had seriously hampered the war operations of the Navy. His position as commander

of our naval forces abroad made him the officer best equipped to review dispassionately the results of our naval activities.

The military errors of the early months of the war in 1917 were not pleasant things to remember. It was only natural that officers in the department, and Mr. Daniels himself, should prefer to think of the successful operations of 1918. It was only human, too, that these later successes should have largely effaced from their memories the disheartening experiences of 1917. Consequently, the tendency on the part of those at home, after the armistice, had been to think and talk only of the later period — to ignore and forget the earlier one.

Admiral Sims, however, realized that it would be fatal to neglect or fail to eradicate the causes of errors, the repetition of which on a future occasion would invite disaster.

On January 7, 1920, therefore, a week before the Senate investigation of the medal awards began, Admiral Sims sent to the Secretary of the Navy, through official channels, a letter dealing with "Certain Naval Lessons of the Great War."

This letter was received in the Navy Department two or three days later. It was referred to Mr. Daniels, who put it in his desk without reading it through. Ordinarily the letter would have died there — as has been the case with so many other official communications during the Daniels administration. Now, however, a leak occurred. Public interest had been attracted to the Navy by the controversy over medal awards. Admiral Sims' courageous defence of naval tradition had caught the public eye. Any information concerning his relations with the Secretary had, therefore, a decided news value.

It was not ascertained in the Senate investigation, exactly how the news of the existence of the letter became public. Only one file copy of it had been made. This had never left Admiral Sims' possession. Only half a dozen of his im-

mediate staff and only one man outside of the naval service knew of its existence. All these were pledged to secrecy. Such a letter on entering the Navy Department passes through many hands — a clerk opens the mail, another records it, a third carries it to the Secretary. In recording the entry of the letter, its contents must be noted. The character of its contents was undoubtedly such as to attract notice and arouse comment and curiosity. It seems, therefore, very probable that the news of the receipt of the letter travelled rapidly through the whispering galleries of Washington.

II

It is at least certain that on January 14, 1920, the *Washington Post* published a story by Mr. Albert W. Fox, headed "Sims Attacks Daniels' Policies," in which Mr. Fox said:

"Secretary Daniels has received another letter from Admiral Wm. S. Sims, which will prove of great interest to the service and the country if the Secretary does not succeed in suppressing it. It is a frank and fearless exposé of the hopeless story of maladministration, mistakes and blunders into which the American Navy has fallen as a result of Mr. Daniels' policies. and it tells the Secretary things that became evident to the Admiral during the war, and are even more evident now. . . .

"If this officer, who is generally regarded here and abroad as one of the most competent naval authorities in the world, finds it necessary to expose Mr. Daniels' management of naval affairs and frankly and fearlessly undertakes the task, it is not probable that Senators will show lack of interest.

"Every one admits that there is something vitally important to the nation involved in naval efficiency, and the big, broad question at issue is how Mr. Daniels' policies are affecting the service."

Admiral Sims was at Newport when this item was published by the *Washington Post*, and knew nothing of it until

his arrival in Washington on January 16th. Mr. Fox later stated that he had not obtained the information from any one connected in any way with Admiral Sims.

The publication of this item aroused great interest and on January 14th, a number of correspondents asked Mr. Daniels about Admiral Sims' letter. The *Washington Post* on January 15th, in reporting the interview, said:

"Secretary Daniels admitted yesterday that he had received a 'critical' or 'controversial' letter from Admiral Sims, but said he had not yet read all of it. He stopped reading it just as it was becoming critical, he explained, and therefore could not comment on the charges against his management of naval affairs made by the Admiral! . . . Besides getting Admiral Sims' views on the actions of Secretary Daniels in the matter of naval awards, which the admiral has described as bringing condemnation and ridicule upon Mr. Daniels and the service and lowering the morale to the last degree, it may be that the committee will develop points having an important bearing on the present condition of confusion and chaos in the Navy."

III

On Friday, January 16th, Admiral Sims appeared before the Senate investigating committee to give testimony with regard to the medal awards. During his testimony on January 17th, he was asked about his letter of January 7th by Chairman Hale.

"*The Chairman:* Admiral Sims, I think, in connection with this matter, if you have had any further correspondence with the Secretary of the Navy about the question of awards and their effect on the morale of the service, it would be well for you to give that correspondence to us at the present time.

"*Admiral Sims:* It does not bear particularly upon the question of the awards, but it does bear upon the question of the morale of the service.

"*The Chairman:* Then I think it is decidedly germane to the issue.

"*Admiral Sims:* As I said before, the action of the Board on the Awards is only the last straw in this whole business.

"*Senator Pittman:*` May I finish this line of examination with regard to this particular subject?

"*The Chairman:* If the Admiral has expressed himself in regard to this matter in any letter that will throw light on the subject we should have it.

"*Senator McCormick:* My sentiment is that we should give the Admiral an opportunity to furnish us these letters before we get too far away from the subject to which they refer."

Senator Pittman continued his questioning of Admiral Sims, obviously with the object of preventing the Chairman of the committee from insisting that Admiral Sims produce his letter. Senator Hale, however, several times interrupted Senator Pittman's questions to insist that the letter be read. Finally, when Pittman had concluded his questions, Senator Hale said:

"*The Chairman:* Now, Senator Pittman, with your permission, we will go ahead with the question I put to the Admiral.

"*Admiral Sims:* As I said in the preliminary statement I made yesterday, this business of the award of medals fell on the service when it was in a very critical condition of morale, which goes back a long way and has quite a good deal to do with the way in which the war was managed from a naval point of view; and it is this question of morale as well as the question of awards that is being investigated. It seems to me that it is quite proper that anything that bears on the morale should be taken into consideration. . . .

"It is the duty of an officer who has been in a responsible position of command during a considerable war, by the regulations of the Navy Department. to state any criticism that he may have which, in his best judgment, will be useful in avoiding mistakes in future wars, and it is the mistake we want to avoid, and not camouflage in any respect."

Admiral Sims then read his letter to the committee.

IV

This letter is too long to quote in full. In it, Admiral Sims, after describing the circumstances under which he had been sent abroad in March, 1917, outlined the recommendations made to the Navy Department, commented on the long delays in getting into the war and in co-operating with the Allies, and cited specific cases of violations of military principles by the Navy Department.

In the opening paragraphs of the letter, Admiral Sims outlined the reasons which led him to submit it.

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island

7 January, 1920.

"From: Rear Admiral William S. Sims, U. S. Navy.
"To: Secretary of the Navy.
"Subject: Certain Naval Lessons of the Great War.

"1. Upon the conclusion of a war in which large naval forces have been engaged, and after a sufficient time has elapsed to permit of a careful estimate of the manner in which the war was conducted, it is of the first importance that the lessons to be derived from this experience be recorded in order that they may serve as a guide in future wars.

"2. This is especially true of a naval war of such a peculiar character that the experience of former wars was of little assistance in determining the proper policy and in developing the unusual tactics that were rendered necessary by the number, geographical position and resources of the countries involved, and by the enemy's method of submarine attack upon merchant shipping in disregard of the tenets of international law and the laws of humanity.

"3. In this respect it is particularly important that a just estimate be made of the errors of policy, tactics, strategy, and administration that were committed by our Navy.

"4. It is to this end that I submit the following account of what appear to me to be the most serious of these errors, and

the circumstances that led up to them, followed by a brief summary of the lessons to be derived therefrom.

"5. This is not presented solely from the viewpoint of the commander of our relatively small naval forces in Europe, but specifically as a result of the experience necessarily gained in the unusual and very responsible position of the Navy Department's representative in the Naval Council of the Allies, where only all Allied plans and policies could be continuously discussed, and where only all essential information, both current and general, was at all times available."

V

It is to be noted that Admiral Sims especially emphasized the point that he was not attacking or condemning anybody or anything. His letter was intended to be, not a full statement of our naval part in the war, but "a just estimate" of "the errors of policy, tactics, strategy and administration that were committed by our Navy." Far from being a depreciation of the services of our Navy in the war, the letter was an analysis of the handicaps and difficulties, imposed by our unpreparedness and by the blunders of the Navy Department upon our operating naval forces.

In the final paragraph of the letter, Admiral Sims made eleven specific criticisms:

"78. The above brief account, of the manner in which our naval operations were conducted, clearly shows that the following grave errors were committed, in violation of fundamental military principles; and it is manifestly desirable that such violations should be avoided in future:

"1. Although war with Germany had been imminent for many months prior to its declaration, there were nevertheless no mature plans developed or naval policy adopted in preparation for war, in so far as its commander in Europe was informed.

"2. The Navy Department did not enter wholeheartedly into the campaign for many months after we declared war,

thus putting a great strain upon the morale of the fighting forces in the war area by decreasing their confidence in their leaders.

" 3. The outbreak of hostilities found many important naval units widely dispersed, and in need of repairs before they could be sent to the critical area.

" 4. Destroyers arriving in the war zone had been cruising extensively off our seaboard and in the Caribbean, and, when war was declared, were rushed through a brief and inadequate preparation for distant service.

" 5. During the most critical months of the enemy submarine campaign against the allied lines of communication, the Department violated the fundamental strategical principle of concentration of maximum force in the critical area of the conflict.

" 6. The Department's representative with the allied admiralties was not supported, during the most critical months of the war, either by the adequate personnel or by the adequate forces that could have been supplied.

" 7. The Department's commander in the critical area of hostilities was never allowed to select his principal subordinates, and was not even consulted as to their assignment. A fundamental principle of the art of command is here involved.

" 8. The Navy Department made, and acted upon, decisions, concerning operations that were being conducted 3,000 miles away, when the conditions were such that full information could not have been in its possession, thus violating an essential precept of warfare that sound decisions necessarily depend upon complete information.

" 9. Instead of relying upon the judgment of those who had had actual war experience in this peculiar warfare, the Navy Department, though lacking not only this experience, but also lacking adequate information concerning it, insisted upon a number of plans that could not be carried out.

" 10. Many of the Department's actions so strongly implied a conviction that it was the most competent to make decisions, concerning operations in the war zone, that the result was an impression that it lacked confidence in the judgment of its rep-

resentative on the Council of the Allies and its responsible commander in the 'field.'

"11. It is a fundamental principle that every action on the part of superior authorities should indicate confidence in subordinates. If such confidence is lacking. it should immediately be restored by ruthlessly changing the subordinate.

"'To interfere with the commander in the field or afloat is one of the most common temptations to the government — and is generally disastrous.' ("The Influence of Sea Power upon History." Mahan.)

The Navy Department did not resist this temptation, and its frequent violation of this principle was the most dangerous error committed during the naval war."

VI

In the body of the letter, many instances were cited to illustrate the points of this concluding paragraph.

As an indication of the attitude of the chief officials in the Department in April, 1917, and as an illustration of the lack of plans or even vague ideas as to what our naval activities in the war would be, Admiral Sims referred to the instructions given him before his departure for Europe in March, 1917:

"6. In the latter part of March, 1917, in response to a request from the American Ambassador in London, expressing the desire of the British Government that a naval officer of high rank be sent to secure the closer co-operation which our Navy Department had suggested, I was ordered abroad on barely 48 hours' notice.

"7. Brief orders were delivered to me verbally in Washington. No formal instructions or statement of the Navy Department's plans or policy were received at that time, though I received the following explicit admonition: 'Don't let the British pull the wool over your eyes. It is none of our business pulling their chestnuts out of the fire. We would as soon fight the British as the Germans.'

"8. I assumed that my mission was to confer with the heads of the allied navies to learn the actual situation and to discuss means for naval co-operation in case the United States declared war against the Central Powers. A lieutenant commander accompanied me as Aide. We were directed not to take uniform and to travel under assumed names. I expected to return and supplement my cables by reporting the situation in person. I had no idea that I would be designated to command the naval forces in Europe in case of war."

VII

The Department not only had no war plans and lacked enthusiasm, in entering the war, but it was also completely ignorant of the naval situation and of the critical nature of the submarine campaign.

"9. I arrived in Liverpool on April 9th, and in London on April 10th, 1917, and went immediately to the Admiralty, where the naval situation was fully explained by the responsible officials. This explanation showed that the Navy Department did not understand the seriousness of the submarine situation; that its information was very incomplete and inaccurate. This was due to the insufficient scope of its intelligence service, very few naval officers having been sent to Europe for information before we entered the war.

"10. A review of the cables sent to the Department in April, 1917, shows that the situation was very serious and that the enemy was rapidly winning the war by the destruction of merchant shipping. Throughout the following year numerous cables and letters of the most urgent possible character were sent with the object of impressing upon the Department the vital necessity of our maximum effort being exerted in the European waters with the least possible delay, but without producing the desired results.

"11. Attention was frequently invited to the fact that shipping was being sunk much faster than it was being built, and that it was a matter of simple arithmetical calculation to de-

termine when the Allies would have to sue for peace if the rate of loss continued."

VIII

After consultation with the Allies, Admiral Sims recommended the sending of all available anti-submarine craft to the war zone. But for months, scores of craft were kept on the Atlantic coast, while the allied appeals went unheeded. The Department was informed that information was available concerning submarine movements which would make it unnecessary to hold vessels on the American coast for defensive purposes, but for many months the principles of sound strategy were violated by withholding forces from the critical area.

"21. There was great delay and reluctance in accepting the indisputable fact, which should have been apparent to any one, that the critical sea area was in the Eastern Atlantic in the so-called submarine war zone; that the submarine campaign could be critical and could effect the ultimate decision of the war only in that area.

"42. It was repeatedly explained that if we could actually entice the enemy into shifting his submarines to our coast it would be greatly to the advantage of the common cause, even granting that our shipping would suffer somewhat more severely; that the chances of the enemy shifting any of his operations to the United States coast without our having advance knowledge, while remote, was a fully justifiable risk; and therefore that such considerations should not deter us in any way from throwing every possible bit of naval strength into the fight on the actual 'front,' that is, in the 'war zone' in European waters. Moreover, that the risk was slight, as vessels could be sent back, if necessary, before submarines could reach our coast, or could do much damage. In making long passages, submarines necessarily steam at slow speed — from 5 to 6 knots.

"40. War is always a dangerous game. Military operations conducted by several allied powers should never be based upon a policy of 'safety first' as regards the interests of any particular

ally. This is especially true where success depends upon the maximum possible protection being given to the allied commerce as a whole."

IX

In dealing specifically with the delays of the Department in sending forces abroad, Admiral Sims stated:

"32. In spite of the numerous messages sent in April, the only information received up to April 27, 1917, was that six destroyers only would be sent. The situation was then so very critical that I appealed to the American Ambassador in London, who sent a most urgent message to the President, and on May 3, 1917, the first definite information was received of the Department's intention to send more than six destroyers, that ultimately 36 and two repair ships would be sent."

Tugs were urgently requested in April, 1917, but none were sent until February, 1918. Submarines were requested, to operate on the Irish coast, in July, 1917, but were not sent until January, 1918. A division of dreadnaughts was requested in July, 1917, but the Department refused to send them until Admiral Benson went abroad in November, 1917. After only a few hours in England, he approved the request made four months before.

Admiral Sims' comment was:

"19. This is but one of a number of examples of a similar kind, and strikingly illustrates the nature of the delays caused by the Department's insistence upon trying to understand the intricate details of rapidly changing conditions 3,000 miles away. As it was of course a physical impossibility to keep the Department fully and accurately informed, and as the Department insisted upon making decisions concerning both the disposition and the actual operations of the European forces, the inevitable result was unsound decisions, and, in some cases, long delays before the Department was induced to accept the original recommendations that were based upon exhaustive discussions of the actual conditions with the heads of the allied navies."

X

Admiral Sims was kept in ignorance of the Department's plans and was often greatly embarrassed to find that the Allied officials were receiving information about the plans and operations of the American Navy of which he knew nothing:

"60. The Department frequently omitted to keep its naval representative abroad informed of its plans, intentions, and sometimes even the movements of forces in the European area, and there was at times embarrassment caused by lack of general information concerning the navy's activities in other areas, such as the South Atlantic, Pacific, etc. As foreign forces and shipping were also operating in those areas, it was embarrassing not to be able to answer, in conferences with the Allies, all questions concerning our actual naval activities as well as prospective plans, the carrying out of which would necessarily influence allied plans.

"61. It requires little imagination to understand the great embarrassment of my position. It was of course impossible even to attempt any explanation of the evident fact that the Allies were not receiving the easily possible naval support in ships, and that I was not receiving adequate assistance in personnel.

"62. Apart from the resulting lack of co-ordination, it was very difficult — I fear sometimes impossible — to avoid the impression conveyed thereby to the heads of the allied navies that I was not being supported or was not in the confidence of the Department."

XI

A notable illustration of the Department's methods was their failure to announce any policy for the first three months in the war, and their subsequent failure to put the policy, when announced, into effect.

"14. The Headquarters in Europe was not infrequently left in ignorance of the Department's policies, plans for operation of United States forces, and its intended action upon my many dis-

patches. Not until July 10, 1917, did the Navy Department outline a policy as regards naval co-operation with the Allies — in a cable quoting a letter to the State Department.

" 15. As usual in such cases, the policy thus set forth was academically sound, but that it was not carried out, or was not understood by the Department, is shown by the fact that for *ten* months after its receipt I was still urgently recommending an increase of forces — still trying to convince the Department that the war was in the Eastern Atlantic; that the United States naval 'Front' was off the European coast and not off the United States coast; that it was there only that the naval enemy was operating; that it was there only that United States shipping, let alone allied shipping, could be protected with the maximum efficiency.

" 13. For some reason which has never been explained, the Navy Department, during at least the first six months of the war, failed to put into actual practice a wholehearted policy of co-operation with the Allies — a policy required for winning the war with the least possible delay.

" 28. For example, in the above-mentioned statement of policy, from the Navy to the State Department, a copy of which was sent me, it is clearly set forth that readiness to co-operate completely, by sending our light forces abroad, was dependent upon the condition that the Allies should keep the Department fully informed, through me, of their plans and intentions.

" 29. In other words, while the Department's first statement of policy (which was dated July, 1917, or three months after we entered the war) was what I had recommended since the beginning, it nevertheless withheld putting it into effect, apparently because of a conviction that the Allies were not keeping it fully informed of their plans.

" 30. The truth of the matter was that nothing was being withheld, and that all policies and plans which were in writing, which were actually of an official nature, and which in any way affected United States naval co-operation had been transmitted to the Department as completely as long distance communication — coded messages — permitted.

XII

During the most critical months of the war, Admiral Sims was denied any assistance in accomplishing his mission and for five months had only one officer to assist him. This situation made it physically impossible for him to get all the information available or to provide the Navy Department with the results of Allied war experience.

"46. Perhaps the most remarkable situation disclosed by the correspondence with the Department is that during the most critical period — the first four months after we entered the war — I had but one Aide, and that for more than the first year I had a wholly inadequate staff.

"47. With all the insistence possible, it was explained in numerous cables and letters, for four weary and anxious months, the absolute necessity of further assistance in order to handle the situation effectively, but only to receive always the same answer, namely, that officers were 'not available.'

"50. It needs little explanation to understand what I and my single Aide were up against. For the efficient handling of such a difficult and complicated situation I should have had a staff capable of:

"Obtaining complete information of the various phases of the naval campaign which had been in operation for over two years.

"Keeping up-to-date with the developments which were rapidly changing, almost from day to day.

"Efficiently administering, supplying and operating the entire force.

"Co-ordinating our work with that of the Allies.

"51. The work of such a staff not only involved attempting to survey the disposition of all enemy forces, but also of all allied forces operating in the North Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean. It was also necessary to keep track of the results of the naval campaign in all its details both from the side of the Allies and from that of the enemy, and to solve the problems of supply, repairs, etc., which would affect any United States naval forces that

might be sent abroad. The above, to say nothing of having to solve problems relating to the entirely new forces introduced into this war, such as aviation — a tremendous problem in itself.

"24. As a matter of fact, this was a physical impossibility during all of that most critical period. The work of collecting the necessary information, or even the purely mechanical work of transcribing it, would have been away beyond the physical capacity of one man assisted by the one Aide I was allowed during that time. The best that could possibly be done was to keep the Department informed by cable in a general way of the conclusions reached by the various discussions with the Allied commanders at the 'front,' and of the decisions based thereon."

XIII

Not only had the Department failed to send the necessary assistance to Admiral Sims, but the attempt was made to decide all questions, even of detail, in Washington. The necessary information was not to be had there, and many mistakes resulted. The Department concentrated its efforts, not on meeting the situation as it existed, but in trying to devise some panacea.

"69. There was insistence by the Department upon finding new naval plans — a royal road to victory — such as blocking the enemy in his ports. The objection to radically new plans was that the situation was critical and their preparation would delay striking quickly with all available forces. This insistence assumed that the Department, incompletely informed as it necessarily was, and without previous experience in the war, was more competent to decide upon practicable plans than their own representative, in continuous conference with the leaders of the allied navies who had had nearly three years' experience. This attitude was maintained until after the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet and the Chief of Naval Operations had visited Europe and learned something of the situation.

XIV

The failure of the Department to realize the situation; the state of unpreparedness in which we entered the war; and the errors and delays after war began, necessarily reduced the effectiveness of our naval intervention and thus prolonged the war.

"26. If the Department had promptly accepted the recommendations made, beginning four days after my arrival abroad, and continuing for some months, and had sent at once all the destroyers and other craft which were finally sent in the next four or five months, it follows that the United States naval intervention would have been much more efficient.

"35. The Department caused serious embarrassment and delays in putting into effect the convoy system which was the most important of all the measures used in defeating the submarine war against allied shipping.

"22. This attitude in Washington greatly slowed the sending of the necessary assistance, and necessarily resulted in prolonging the war."

XV

After Admiral Sims had read his letter, the Chairman said:

"As there are, apparently, certain matters contained in this letter which Admiral Sims has read at my request (and with the contents of which I was not familiar), I shall ask the chairman of the full Naval Affairs Committee to determine what action the committee desires to take and whether it wishes to give this subcommittee further authority or whether it wishes to appoint another committee to take up the investigation of the matters herein contained."

On Monday, January 19, 1920, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee voted:

"that the sub-committee heretofore appointed to investigate the matter of awards made by the Navy Department for distinguished

and heroic service, be, and it hereby is, authorized and directed, on making its reports on the matter referred to, to investigate and report on the matters referred to in the letter of Admiral Sims to the Navy Department in criticism of its action touching operations during the war, introduced before the said sub-committee."

The report of the sub-committee on the medal awards investigation was made on March 7, 1920.

On March 9, 1920, the sub-committee began its investigation of the conduct of the war by the Navy Department. Admiral Sims was asked to appear as the first witness, to furnish proof of his criticisms.

So began the investigation that was to make available, for the first time, the whole disheartening story of the maladministration of the Navy by Josephus Daniels.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCOPE OF THE NAVAL INVESTIGATION

I

FROM March 9, 1920, to May 28, 1920, the sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs held daily sessions. A score of witnesses were examined and voluminous testimony was received. Literally thousands of official papers were introduced in substantiation of the statements of the witnesses. The testimony when printed amounted to over 3,500 pages.

Although the sub-committee was the same that had conducted the medal awards investigation, two of the members were changed. Senators Poindexter and McCormick were replaced by Senators Keyes (New Hampshire) and Ball (Delaware).

II

The scope of the investigation widened, as, in the course of the hearings, the full extent of the mal-administration of the Navy, in the years immediately before the war, was established. After Admiral Sims had concluded his testimony and presented full documentary substantiation of his criticisms, the sub-committee turned its attention to the Navy Department itself, in the endeavour to learn why such conditions as those described by Admiral Sims existed.

A number of officers who had held responsible positions in the Department since 1913 were therefore called. Rear Admiral B. A. Fiske, the Aide for Operations from 1913 to 1915, and Rear Admiral W. F. Fullam, Aide for Per-

sonnel in 1913–14, described the conditions in the first period of Mr. Daniels' administration. They told of the unavailing efforts of naval officers to secure the adoption of sound policies and methods or to prepare the Navy for war.

The sub-committee also called a number of officers who had served in the Department during the war: Captain Harris Laning, who had been assistant for matériel and later Assistant Chief (and for a time Acting Chief) of the Bureau of Navigation; Captain J. K. Taussig, who had been head of the enlisted personnel section in the Bureau of Navigation and who had commanded the first division of destroyers to be sent abroad in 1917; Captain L. C. Palmer, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and in charge of the personnel of the Navy during the war; Rear Admiral A. W. Grant, who had been the head of the Submarine Service from 1915 to 1917 and who commanded the reserve battleship fleet during the greater part of the war; Rear Admiral C. P. Plunkett, who had been Inspector of Target Practice in the Department and who had commanded the 14-inch naval railway batteries in France.

The committee also called Admiral Mayo, commander-in-chief of the Atlantic Fleet during the war.

All of these witnesses gave testimony substantially confirming every criticism of Admiral Sims. They also went much further than he and, in their description of the conditions prevailing in the Navy Department, revealed a state of chaos, indecision, unpreparedness and lack of direction, which, as Admiral Sims stated in his rebuttal testimony, was infinitely worse than anything he had imagined. The responsibility for these conditions was laid squarely upon the Secretary himself.

III

The Secretary of the Navy, obviously alarmed and chagrined at the damaging revelations of these witnesses,

spared no effort to counteract the effect of their testimony. He made use of all the official influence of his position, and of all of his undoubted talent for evasion and misrepresentation, to distract public attention from the facts established during the investigation.

His tactics were soon made manifest. He endeavoured to defend his administration before the court of public opinion, realizing that he could not controvert the facts presented to the committee. He requested Senator Hale to call as witnesses the naval officers whom he had selected for positions of honour and authority and thus exacted from them a return for favours, past and future. These witnesses were asked to make a general defence of the Navy, by denying in ambiguous terms the criticisms of the earlier witnesses, and by emphasizing the undoubted successes that the Navy achieved in the latter part of the war, after the period of nearly a year of delay and of grievous blunders, covered by Admiral Sims' criticisms.

At the same time, the Secretary endeavoured to discredit his critics by the introduction of irrelevant issues which he thought might be damaging to them in the public mind.

He attempted to make it appear that Admiral Sims and other officers were men with grievances — that they were actuated chiefly by wounded vanity.

He supplied the senior Democratic member of the committee, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, a staunch administration supporter, with many confidential and personal papers, by the use of which sensational but irrelevant and false impressions could be conveyed.

IV

Mr. Daniels, through his knowledge of the press, and through the misuse of his official power, was able to influence many of the press reports of the hearings. There are over

sixty press bureaus in Washington, which collect daily the news of the doings of the government from all departments. These press bureaus are completely dependent upon the good will of the government departments. If they offend, their news sources can be automatically cut off. Self interest, therefore, often compels them to yield to official pressure.

As a result, the reports of the testimony of the various witnesses were often garbled and inaccurate. This was especially true when the witnesses called at Mr. Daniels' request were testifying. Each of these witnesses had prepared a statement (or had had one prepared for him in the Department) praising the Navy and its achievements and denying, in general and ambiguous terms, the truth of the criticisms directed against the Navy Department. These statements were given to the press in advance and the news stories of their testimony sent out were based almost entirely on them. It was thus made to appear that many officers of high rank were giving the lie to Admiral Sims.

Yet, in practically every case, these witnesses, under the able and searching cross-examination of Senator Hale, were forced to admit the truth of practically every one of Admiral Sims' criticisms which they had denied or attempted to explain away in their direct statements. They admitted that the Navy was pitifully unprepared in 1917, that the Secretary himself was responsible, that the Navy Department's organization had to be remade under the stress of war, and that many serious blunders had unavoidably occurred.

This cross-examination was hardly reported at all. A statement like Admiral Rodman's that "there are three kinds of lies; lies, damn lies, and statistics," and that Admiral Sims' testimony belonged in the third category, was headlined by nearly every newspaper in the country. Admiral Rodman's admission that he knew nothing of the facts at issue, that his own ships were sent abroad with inadequately trained crews, and that he sailed without definite orders, in-

structions or plans, went unnoticed. Admiral McKean's statement that Sims' testimony was the kind to be expected of an insane patient at St. Elizabeth's was similarly headlined. His admissions under cross-examination, that the Navy entered the war without plans; that the ships were unready for war service, and had inadequate crews; that the Secretary delayed important decisions for many months, were either not reported at all or were passed over very lightly.

Even the local representatives of some of the great news associations were not free from Daniels' influence. On the day when Mr. Daniels was confronted with documents which showed conclusively that he had made misstatements officially and in writing to the United States Senate in April, 1916, for the purpose of concealing his own mistakes and omissions, the Associated Press sent out a story which hardly mentioned the incident.

The following day, when Mr. Daniels had concluded his testimony, a Washington correspondent of the Associated Press, approached him in the sight of many people and effusively congratulated him on "getting out of so many pretty tight holes." Mr. Daniels clapped his hands on the reporter's shoulders affectionately and said, "Yes, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate all *you* have done for me."

The political power of an unscrupulous Secretary in Washington is very great. The newspaper men live by news, and often can get it only by playing up to those who control news sources.

The playing up of vicious attacks and insinuations against Admiral Sims and other hostile witnesses, the "soft pedalling" of damaging testimony, did much to divert the public mind from the real issues and to leave it with an incorrect and inadequate conception of what the testimony had actually demonstrated.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESULTS OF UNPREPAREDNESS AND INEFFICIENCY

(Admiral Sims' Testimony: March, 1920)

I

THE country had waited impatiently for Admiral Sims' testimony before the Senate Committee. The publication of his letter in January had shattered the legend built up by Mr. Daniels. It had raised many questions concerning our naval intervention in the war, upon which more information was desired. The letter of January 7th had been widely commented upon in the press. The Secretary, immediately after its publication, had publicly condemned Admiral Sims' criticism and had declared that that officer would be required to furnish proofs of all his criticisms; that a naval court of inquiry would investigate them, if the Senate committee failed to bring out full proofs.

In the interval between January 17th, when the letter was read, and March 9th, when Admiral Sims began his testimony, Mr. Daniels had spared no effort to discredit the Admiral and his criticisms, and to divert the attack from himself to the naval officers who had served in the department or afloat during the war.

In a statement of January 19, 1920, the Secretary said that Admiral Sims had not held an independent command abroad, but had been only a liaison officer to obtain information from the Allies; and that he had been subordinate to Admiral Mayo. He claimed that Admiral Sims was ag-

grieved because he had not been given " carte blanche " during the war; that many of Sims' recommendations were unsound; and that the naval officers in the department, and Sims' superior, Admiral Mayo, had disagreed with him.

Mr. Daniels, in his testimony in February, in the medal awards investigation, had made a violent attack upon Admiral Sims. In July, 1919, Mr. Daniels had recommended that Sims be made a permanent admiral for life and had written a letter giving him superlative praise. In February, 1920, the Secretary told the Senate committee that he no longer believed Sims should be made a permanent admiral because he had violated confidences, because he had gratuitously attacked the Irish people and because he had been unduly pro-British during the war. Mr. Daniels had also published personal letters from Admiral Sims and confidential fitness reports on Admiral Wilson, and had sent them out by Navy Radio apparently with the hope of creating a rift in naval circles and of aligning many officers against Admiral Sims. He accused Sims of opposing and blocking the laying of the Northern Mine Barrage, hoping thus to utilize the public interest in that operation to Admiral Sims' disadvantage. He attempted to make it appear that Sims' criticisms had a political motive, and accused the Admiral of disloyalty, because he had failed to criticize his superiors until after the end of the war. He appealed to the public sentiment against official squabbles by declaring that Sims' criticisms would only lead to internal dissension in the Navy, as had been the case in the Sampson-Schley controversy, after the Spanish war.

The Secretary sought especially to convey the impression that Admiral Sims' criticisms were hasty and ill-considered; that they were inspired by temper and were not based on fact.

The public, however, had suspended judgment until Admiral Sims should have an opportunity to disclose the evi-

dence on which his criticisms were based. They recognized the fact that an officer of his distinction would not have made criticisms of so grave a character without having ample evidence to prove his points.

II

Admiral Sims had asked the Committee for assistance from the chief officers who had served on his staff abroad, in presenting his testimony. In preparing his statement, he had therefore had the assistance of the officers who had been directly responsible for the various phases of our naval operations overseas or who had been most familiar with the history of the early months of the war. These officers included Rear Admiral N. C. Twining, chief of staff of the Pacific Fleet and formerly Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, who had been Sims' chief of staff during the war; Captain H. I. Cone, commander of the naval aviation forces abroad and later Aide for Aviation on Sims' staff, who had been Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering from 1909–1913; Captain B. A. Long, who had been, as head of the Convoy Section of Sims' staff, in charge of all of our convoy operations in the danger zone; Captain D. W. Knox, of the Planning Section of the overseas forces who is one of the most scholarly strategists in the Navy; Commander J. V. Babcock, who had been Admiral Sims' Personal Aide and Chief Intelligence Officer during the war, and who had been his only assistant for the first four months; Lieutenant Commander W. A. Edwards, Admiral Sims' personal aide at the Naval War College, who had been Aide for Aviation on his staff abroad; and Lieutenant T. B. Kittredge, U. S. N. R. F., who had been in the Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' staff and in charge of all secret and confidential records of the London Headquarters. A number of other officers had also assisted.

In his statement, therefore, Admiral Sims was presenting, not so much his own personal views, as a careful review of our war policy and naval operations, based throughout on documentary evidence and on the experience and judgment of many of the most capable younger officers of the Navy, whose position during the war had given them ample opportunity to know what the facts were.

III

At no time did Admiral Sims enter into personalities or make any statement attacking personally either the Secretary of the Navy or any officer of the Navy. No one had given greater praise than he, in his articles published in the *World's Work*, to the officers and men of the Navy at home and abroad for their initiative, courage and achievements. In criticizing the department, for the unpreparedness of the Navy at the time war began, and for its delays in getting the Navy into the war, Admiral Sims pointed out that he was in no sense belittling the Navy or its achievements in the war.

In his preliminary statement on March 9th, Admiral Sims took occasion to refer to the misrepresentations " aimed at prejudicing this case by wholly irrelevant subjects, prior to its investigation by this committee." He pointed out that the Secretary had been carrying on " a campaign of deliberate propaganda " to divert attention from the issue.

In order that his position might be made quite clear, Admiral Sims, in his preliminary statement, stated the motives that had actuated him in writing his letter of January 7, 1920, inviting attention to the lessons of the war. He said:

" Let me point out, in the simplest and clearest possible manner, the paramount motive upon which my letter was based. It is this. We entered a great war. The war was won, thanks to

a combination of circumstances which it would be entirely unsafe and unwise to depend upon in the future. From a U. S. naval standpoint the prosecution of the war involved numerous violations of well recognized and fundamental military principles with which every student of naval warfare is familiar.

" Briefly stated, they were:

" First.— Unpreparedness in spite of the fact that war had been a possibility for at least two years and was, in fact, imminent for many months before its declaration.

Second.— That we entered it with no well considered policy or plans and with our forces on the sea not in the highest state of readiness.

Third.— That owing to the above conditions, and to the lack of proper organization of our Navy Department, and perhaps to other causes with which I am not familiar, we failed for at least six months to throw our full weight against the enemy; that during this period we pursued a policy of vacillation, or in simpler words, a hand-to-mouth policy, attempting to formulate our plans from day to day, based upon an incorrect appreciation of the situation.

" The Great War lasted 1500 days. 5,000,000 lives were lost. About 3,000 daily. This, to say nothing of wealth and resources. If my assertions of vacillating policy and unnecessary delays are true, I indeed had a compelling motive in taking steps to preclude their recurrence in the future.

" I believed, therefore, in view of the unusual position which I held during the war as an integral part of our departmental organization, that it was my duty to point out at least some reasons for the fundamental errors which were committed.

" My sole object in submitting my letter to the Department was not to demonstrate who was right and who was wrong, but rather to insure so thorough an appreciation of our errors before time had obscured them that the chances of repeating them would be minimized, if not eliminated, in the future.

" In other words, gentlemen, let me state as forcefully as I can that in this entire question I have no object other than that of the future efficiency of the naval service and the safety of the country. I am at the end of my career, I have everything to lose

and nothing to gain. There is no possible question of my having a grievance. There is absolutely no question of personalities. I have no further ambition whatever. When this inquiry is over I return to the simple duties of my profession to finish out the very short remaining time before my retirement.

"Reference to my letter of January 7th, 1920, will indicate clearly that its object is first and last constructive. This object is impossible of accomplishment without a consideration of such mistakes as may have been committed.

"The subject is one which vitally affects the future efficiency of what must always be our first line of national defence — the Navy — and the great danger is that because of our ultimate success in this war, we may fail to realize that we very narrowly escaped defeat on the sea; that our state of preparedness when we entered the war was dangerously inadequate; and that our administrative methods, especially during the early stages of our participation, were seriously at fault. Such defects, in a war in which the enemy is not already so seriously occupied at sea as he was in this war must inevitably jeopardize gravely our national security.

"Under these circumstances, expressions of opinion concerning such matters were in no sense an attack, and it is most deplorable that they have been made to appear so. They were, on the contrary, impersonal official representations submitted for the consideration of the Navy Department in preparation for future campaigns. They were actuated by motives of duty; they were constructive and I believe them to be entirely in accord with the teachings of accepted authorities on the art of war. Should this discussion unfortunately assume the character of personal recrimination or political controversy, the effect may well be so to obscure the issue that no lasting good will result. On the other hand, if these opinions are given careful consideration in connection with the preparation of plans for future wars, by the officers detailed to these duties, as was intended and as would ordinarily have been done, very great benefit would accrue to the Navy.

"It is nothing but self-evident camouflage to convey the impression in these modern days that such an issue as this one raised by me is an attack on civilian control of our naval service. A

civilian head of the military branches of a democratic government is essential. There is not the slightest danger of militarism in this country. The public rules. We in the Navy are servants of the public and aspire to nothing else. The Navy claims to be as representative a national organization as the Congress itself. It is for this very reason that I have had the temerity to risk my personal fortunes at the very end of my career and lay before the responsible heads of the Navy such radical criticisms of their own conduct of the public's interests.

"In view of the public presentation of this case, which has resulted from no intent on my part, I am perhaps handicapped by lack of any connection with the press or experience in manipulating that important instrument of public opinion.

"I can only present my case in the simple vocabulary of my profession, and trust to the sagacity of this committee to perceive the only essential issues at stake, namely a just appraisal of those questions which in any way endanger the public interest."

IV

Admiral Sims' testimony, the documents introduced by him and the reports of the Secretary of the Navy, clearly establish his position and responsibilities during the war. In response to a request from Ambassador Page that a naval officer of high rank be sent to co-operate with the Allies, in view of the probability of the United States entering the war, Admiral Sims was ordered abroad, on six hours' notice, at the end of March, 1917. He was given no instructions other than the general statement that he was to co-operate with the Allies and obtain such information about war conditions as might be valuable to the Navy Department. Before his departure Admiral Sims received no formal or informal statement, from any official of the Navy Department, of the policy that would govern the United States Navy in the event of a declaration of war against Germany. He was not informed as to whether any forces would be sent abroad nor as to whether he should command them if

they were sent. He was provided with no explicit instructions of any character.

On arriving in England, Admiral Sims had immediately proceeded to inform himself of the conditions existing, and to send back full and complete reports of the military and naval situation. He made recommendations, agreed upon after conference with the Allied authorities, as to the measure of co-operation to be afforded by the United States Navy. In the absence of any definite instructions, policy or plans from the Navy Department, he felt it his duty to make such recommendations as the situation demanded and to urge upon the Department the adoption of a definite policy and of an active plan of operations. This he did from the time of his first arrival in England, as the scores of telegrams he quoted in his testimony show.

At no time during the war did he receive any definite instructions or delegation of authority from the Navy Department, such as were given to General Pershing by the War Department when the latter went abroad to command the American Expeditionary Forces. On April 28th, 1917, Admiral Sims was appointed by the Department to command the "United States Destroyer Forces operating from British bases." Orders issued by the Department to Captain W. B. Fletcher on June 1st, 1917, directed him to report to Admiral Sims, who would be "in general command of all forces in European waters." On June 14th, 1917, the title of Admiral Sims' position was changed to "Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters." In October, 1917, he was given authority by the Department to make such disposition and regrouping of forces in European waters as was necessary, such changes to be based on agreement with the Allies.

From the time of his arrival abroad, Admiral Sims had been acting, in accordance with his verbal orders, as the representative of the Navy Department. In this capacity,

he had attended Allied conferences; in Paris, May 2nd to 5th, 1917; in London, May 28th to 30th, 1917; in Paris, July 25th to 28th, 1917; and in London, September 3rd to 7th, 1917. The cables exchanged with the Navy Department during this period show that that Department considered him their fully qualified representative with the Allied navies. This position was confirmed, after the formal organization of the Allied Naval Council, by his receipt of telegraphic orders from the Department to act as the American member of this Council, representing the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations.

An examination of the documents submitted in evidence also shows that from the beginning the Department looked upon Admiral Sims as the Commander of all forces in European waters, regardless of their geographical location or of the nature of their operations. The vessels under his command were, for the most part, drawn from the Atlantic Fleet. Admiral Sims had, therefore, received orders in July, 1917, assigning his forces to duty with the Atlantic Fleet, but these orders provided that the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet would assume the actual command over these forces only in the event of a possible combined operation in which the major forces of the fleet would take a part. Such a situation never arose. Throughout the war Admiral Sims, in accordance with instructions from the Department, reported only to the Department and corresponded directly with the Department. At no time did he receive any definite order from the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet. He was responsible, and subordinate, so far as operations in Europe were concerned, only to the Navy Department.

It is therefore clear that from the beginning the major mission assigned Admiral Sims was that of acting as the Navy Department's representative in the Naval Council of the Allies, and that, in addition to this mission, he was also as-

signed the command of all United States naval forces, afloat and ashore, operating in European waters.

V

Admiral Sims, in his testimony, gave a very graphic description of the difficulties he had had in the early part of the war in getting information from the Navy Department. Among other things he said:

"I will now turn to the subject discussed in paragraphs 60 to 66 of my letter of January 7th, 1920. In these paragraphs it was pointed out that I was left in ignorance of many of the departmental plans, of many of the important dispositions and movements of forces into the area of my command (as well as elsewhere), and of delays and confusion which were caused by the department failing to use me for the purpose for which they had sent me abroad, and attempting to carry on independent similar negotiations with local representatives of the European navies in Washington; also the embarrassment which these conditions caused me, through the impression naturally created in the minds of allied naval authorities that I was not being supported, and was not in the confidence of the department.

"It might be pointed out that the different allied navy departments were in a measure responsible for these difficulties, because they continued at times to use these independent methods of negotiations, that is, through their local representatives in Washington. Undoubtedly, at times, such independent negotiations resulted in direct conflict with my recommendations. It must be remembered that my recommendations did not forward merely the exact propositions of the allied admiralties, but they embodied as well my conclusions as the representative of the department, following discussions with the allied leaders. My first loyalty was always to the cause as a whole, but, second, was my direct loyalty to my own department at home. My mission was not merely to transmit the propositions of the allied leaders. It was up to me to act, in every sense of the word, as the representative of the Navy Department, and, after having the essential benefit of

conferences with the Allied leaders, to give the department the results thereof, together with my own recommendations based on all available information and upon the policies of my own service. It will be found throughout my despatches that, wherever I was giving verbatim recommendations of allied leaders, it was so stated.

" One of the great difficulties of this war, as of all other allied wars, was found to be that of securing effective co-operation among the forces of the Allies — the difficulty of getting team work out of a team made up of different nations — the difficulty of different nations subordinating many of their own national interests to a common end.

" As a matter of fact, in the particular case here under discussion, the Allies carried on negotiations with our Navy Department, through their Washington representatives, partly because they found me in ignorance of plans and intentions, concerning which their Washington representatives had already informed them. They also found that the department was apparently ready to deal with these local representatives.

" It is little wonder that much confusion was created in the department through numerous requests and recommendations coming in from the different Allies. The grave danger of such procedure was that Allied team work would be weakened and American interests suffer.

" I want to stress here, however, that because other navy departments made errors is no reason whatever for our having done the same. This is one of the principal objects I had in view in submitting my letter to the department — to invite attention to such mistakes in order that they might be avoided in the future.

" It seems to me that no explanation is required to demonstrate the soundness of the proposition that, from our standpoint at least, all of this confusion and delay and misunderstanding could have been avoided by the simple process of referring all of the requests and recommendations, which came from various European sources, to the department's own representative abroad. He was in a position to bring the matter before the responsible Allied naval leaders (and, after the formation of the Allied Naval Council, before that body) for a full discussion in all its phases,

in the light of the fullest and latest information, and to cable the result to the Navy Department for its guidance. This procedure insured, so far as was humanly possible, that due consideration would be given to the cause of the Allies as a whole, rather than to the often conflicting interests of the individual countries concerned.

"It was natural, for the Italian Navy Department and the French Navy Department, and the British Admiralty, to continue to communicate with their attachés in Washington, as they had done during the previous three years of the war. In fact, a great many such communications were automatic and were made without the direct knowledge of the leaders themselves, although actually made in their names. For instance, one section of the British Admiralty, wanting something in America, would drive through a message to the naval attaché in Washington in the name of the head of the British Admiralty, not taking into account, of course, the fact that similar requests might be sent in at the same time from the French and Italians."

VI

Admiral Sims repeatedly called attention to the fact that the Navy was not prepared for war when war began. An examination of his testimony shows that this unpreparedness was revealed in many different ways. First, the Navy Department either had no well-defined policy at the outbreak of war, or failed to inform its representative abroad of it for at least three months after war began. Second, the Department had no war plans adequate to meet the situation presented by the submarine campaign, which was the critical feature of the war at the time of the entry of the United States. Third, the vessels of the Navy were not in a condition of material readiness for war when war began. Fourth, the shortage of personnel was so great that large numbers of untrained men were sent abroad, and the sending of forces was greatly delayed. Fifth, the Navy Department displayed an astonishing moral unpreparedness

for war, in its attitude toward the Allies and toward the recommendations of its representative abroad, at least during the first six months of the war.

No indication of our naval policy was given Admiral Sims until June 24th. He was then informed, by cable, that the Navy Department was ready to co-operate with the Allies in putting down the submarine campaign, by sending anti-submarine craft in any number "*compatible with home needs*"; and that the Navy Department was prepared to consider requests from the Allies for other forces, *provided the reason for these requests could be made clear to the Navy Department.* This statement of policy was enlarged upon in a cable received in London on July 10th, 1917, quoting a letter transmitted on July 3, 1917, by the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of State. In this message, the co-operation of the United States with the Allies was qualified, first, by the requirements of home defence, on a coast 3,000 miles from the war zone which was not exposed to any attack except, perhaps, from sporadic and unimportant submarine raids; and, secondly, by a consideration of the future needs of the United States, after the war. Such a policy was obviously completely inadequate to meet the situation created in 1917 by the success of the enemy submarine campaign in the war zone and by the possibility of a German victory over the Allies before the latent power of the United States could be made effective.

The documents submitted by Admiral Sims in his testimony show that he received from the Department no war plans nor no intimation as to possible operations. If such plans existed, it seems very strange that the representative, sent to co-operate with the Allies and to command the forces in European waters, should have been kept in complete ignorance of them. The Department's delays in acting upon recommendations and their apparent failure to understand

the critical nature of the submarine campaign, convinced Admiral Sims that no sound plan existed in Washington.

Of the vessels sent to participate in the campaign against submarines, during the first twelve months of America's intervention in the war, the great majority were in existence on April 6th, 1917, and could have been sent immediately if they had been ready for war, and if the Department had so decided. Many of these vessels had to undergo long repair periods before sailing for Europe. The sending of forces was greatly delayed, by the necessity of getting them into fit condition for war service, after war began.

Similarly, an examination of the cables from the Navy Department to Admiral Sims in 1917, reveals a shortage of personnel, at the time of our entrance into the war, which greatly delayed the intervention of our forces and seriously decreased their operating efficiency.

VII

The documents introduced by Admiral Sims show that the moral unreadiness for war had even more serious consequences. The lack of any pronounced will to victory on the part of the directing heads of the Navy Department, their avowed prejudices against certain of the Allies, resulted in their failing to make effective use even of the forces that were available and ready in April, 1917. The failure of the Navy Department to act upon recommendations made to them, based upon full agreement with the Allies, during the first six months of the war; the holding back of forces on the American coast; the hesitation and delay in adopting the convoy system; and the insistence on various plans designed to protect American shipping alone, regardless of what might happen to the Allies; furnish abundant proof of Admiral Sims' charge that the Department did not enter whole-heartedly into the war for at least the first six months.

Far from being an exaggeration, this was rather a mild statement of the moral unpreparedness of the responsible heads of the Navy Department. The degree to which the Navy Department was actuated by considerations other than that of defeating the common enemy as quickly as possible, and the uniform policy of postponing action on recommendation shows clearly, either that victory over Germany was not considered the prime mission of the Navy in the war, or that the heads of the Navy Department paid no attention to the information received from abroad and based their plans and operations on an ignorance of the war situation, as complete as it is inexcusable.

The evidence introduced demonstrates beyond a possibility of a doubt that the submarine campaign had created in April, 1917, a situation which, in the words of Ambassador Page in his cable to the State Department of April 27th, 1917, gave reason for the " greatest alarm " about the issue of the war.

" This seems to me the sharpest crisis of the war and the most dangerous situation for the Allies that has arisen or could arise. . . . I cannot exaggerate the pressing and increasing danger of the situation. . . . There is no time to be lost."

This situation was fully described by Admiral Sims in more than a score of cables sent to the Department in April and May, 1917. Though the language used was often extremely emphatic, a review of the situation shows that it was in no degree exaggerated.

Mr. Hoover, on returning to America at the end of April, 1917, submitted a full report to the President and the Council of National Defence, describing the situation. In his testimony before the Committee on March 13th, 1920, Mr. Hoover stated that in April, 1917:

" The situation was dangerous almost beyond description and the anxiety in the whole of that period was terrific. I cannot

overemphasize the critical character of that position and the dangers in which the whole Allied cause rested."

The Department's ignorance of the situation, if such existed, cannot be explained by any lack of information from their accredited representative abroad and from the most responsible sources of information available to them at that time.

VIII

Admiral Sims in speaking of his relations with the Navy Department in the early months of the war, said:

"The first part of the testimony is intended to explain the seriousness of the military situation at the time that this country declared war; to clearly show that the situation was not only critical, but that the Allies were at that time in fact losing the war; that the Navy Department was furnished with complete information concerning this critical situation; and that I put forth every possible effort to acquaint them with all the facts concerning the situation; that, in accordance with the mission assigned to me, and based upon constant conference with the heads of the Allied naval services, I set forth the specific nature of the part which we should have at once taken; that I was wholly unable to get satisfactory replies from the department and, further, that if the department appreciated and understood the situation, they failed to take action commensurate therewith.

"I wish here to state, that there is no issue whatever as to whether the information I sent and the recommendations I made were accurate or exaggerated, no issue as to whether I was right and every one else in the Navy at home wrong, as will be shown later in the testimony. It will be clearly established that by the end, say, of six months, the department accepted and adopted the policies and recommendations that I had made from the very beginning, and hence that there is no disagreement whatever between me and other naval officials as to the U. S. naval policy in the war, providing the time element is not considered, that is, providing we disregard the first 4 to 6 critical months

of war, the occurrences during which are, almost exclusively, the issues I have seen fit to raise."

IX

Admiral Sims, in the early part of his testimony, made an estimate of the probable results of the delays of the Navy Department in getting our naval forces into the war. This, of course, was not intended to be anything more than an approximation to show the cost of delays in warfare.

"I am submitting to the committee an estimate, based upon the data available, of the losses caused the Allies and the United States by the delays in getting American naval forces into action against the enemy submarines.

"The figures which I have before me show clearly that in April, 1917, the Allied cause seemed doomed on account of the losses of tonnage. In the first four months of the year there had been a net loss of over two million tons, or 7 per cent. of the total Allied and neutral shipping; and the rate of losses had been increasing every month. In the month of April alone the net loss amounted to eight hundred thousand tons, or twice as much as in the whole period of the war before January 1, 1917. It was apparent that these losses, if continued, would soon reduce the tonnage to such an extent that military requirements, and requirements of the populations of the Allied countries, could not longer be maintained. The imports had already been reduced by 40 per cent. from the pre-war figures. They could not be reduced further without starving the armies or the civil populations of the Allied countries. Any further reduction at the rate then existing would have made it impossible to have transported an American army or to maintain it when once abroad.

"With the adoption of the convoy system and the anti-submarine measures put into effect by the Allies with our assistance in 1917, the losses were gradually reduced until in October, 1918, they amounted to only 100,000 tons. The period between the beginning of the German unrestricted submarine campaign and the armistice can be divided into three phases so far as losses of merchant tonnage are concerned:

"*First.*— The period from February 1, 1917, to the end of July, 1917, when American aid was lacking and when shipping was not being convoyed. Average losses 640,000 tons.

"*Second.*— The period of August 1, 1917, to February 1, 1918, when there was a partial employment of the convoy system and moderate assistance from America. Losses 390,000 tons per month.

"*Third.*— The period from February 1, 1918, to the armistice, when full co-operation was given by America, and consequently full use could be made of the convoy system. Losses 250,000 tons per month.

"As will be noted, each of these successive phases of the unrestricted submarine campaign is marked by the degree of naval co-operation received from America. An analysis of the situation, therefore, shows that if the United States Navy had been prepared for war when war began, and if the wholehearted policy of co-operation with the Allies had been followed from the beginning, the first period mentioned above would probably have come to an end within a month after we entered the war, that is, by May 1, 1917. The second period would probably have ended by August 1, as by that time the full weight of our co-operation would probably have been felt. An estimate of the amount of tonnage that would have been saved, shows, therefore, that, if the first period had ended May 1, and the second period on August 1, 1917, a million and a half tons of shipping would have been saved to the Allies in 1917. Similarly, at least another million tons would have been saved in 1918.

"It can thus be said that the failure of the Navy Department to enter the war immediately and whole-heartedly cost the Allied cause a whole two and one-half million tons of shipping sunk unnecessarily. While this is of course an estimate only, it is based upon actual results obtained when our help became effective, and there is no reason to doubt that it is a conservative estimate.

"The loss of this amount of shipping can also be translated into a definite prolongation of the war and an unnecessary sacrifice of blood and treasure in accomplishing the victory. As General Pershing clearly shows in his report to the Secretary of

War, the primary consideration, limiting the number of American troops that could be sent to France, was that of tonnage. The tonnage losses of 1917 made it impossible at the time to transport any considerable American army and, at the same time, continue the absolutely essential military supplies and food for the civil populations of the Allied countries. It therefore became necessary to limit the number of American troops that could be sent abroad during the first year to an average of approximately 25,000 men per month. If the additional million and a half tons sunk unnecessarily in 1917 had been saved by the prompt cooperation of our Navy, the number of American soldiers sent to France could have been doubled or trebled. If the tonnage had been available and the additional American troops had been sent to France, and the new drafts called more promptly in this country, America could have had a million men in France by March, 1918, instead of 300,000.

"A review of the various books by military experts and of the available information concerning the German campaign of 1918, shows that the earlier defeat of the submarine campaign would have had the effect of very greatly shortening the war. The Germans had hoped, and continued to hope until the beginning of 1918, that the submarines would force the Allies to peace. The offensive of 1918 on land was only projected and undertaken when the German staff realized that the submarine could not bring them victory. If, therefore, the tonnage losses had been so reduced by August, 1917, that the defeat of the submarine campaign could have been accomplished, it would, without a doubt, have reacted upon the morale of the German population at that time as it did actually in 1918. The German high command would then have been forced into its desperate military venture earlier than March, 1918, when the offensive was actually launched against the Allies, or would have been forced to endure the victorious assault of the Allies in the early spring of 1918, which, as a result of the losses suffered in the first months of the German offensive, and because of the delay in getting American troops in sufficient number, actually did not begin until the middle of July, 1918. In either of these cases, the presence of a million Americans in France on March 1, and the arrival of another mil-

lion within another three months, would undoubtedly have brought a victory by July, if one may judge from what actually happened when these American forces did become available and thus tip the military scale in favor of the Allies.

"The loss unnecessarily of the two and a half million tons of shipping, therefore, in all probability, postponed the end of the war at least four months. The average loss of life per day during the war, was 3,000 men. This prolongation of the war, therefore, cost half a million lives. Similarly, as the war cost the Allies $100,000,000 a day on the average, this prolongation resulted in the unnecessary expenditure of $15,000,000,000, of which at least one-third was expended by the United States directly or loaned to the Allies.

"I have made this estimate not because I assume or pretend that it is complete, but in order to present to you some conception of what such a policy as that of the Navy Department's in the first six months of the war, and of such delays and military errors as those committed by the department in this same time, cost the nation and the Allies. I merely wish to call your attention, as vividly as possible, to the fact that the questions under discussion are not purely academic, but have the vastest consequences that must inevitably be suffered unnecessarily if such mistakes are committed in time of war. It is no light matter which cost the cause for which we were fighting half a million lives, fifteen billions of dollars, and two and a half million tons of shipping."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DELAYS AND BLUNDERS OF 1917

I

DURING the first three months of Admiral Sims' mission abroad, his recommendations were not only almost uniformly disregarded or disapproved but, at the time, they were not even answered. From about the first of July, 1917, the messages from the Department indicated that they were at least considering Admiral Sims' recommendations, action in many cases was accelerated and it was sometimes favourable. It was not until after Admiral Mayo had gone abroad in August, 1917, and reinforced Admiral Sims' pleas by his own insistent recommendations; and after Admiral Benson had gone in November, 1917, and seen for himself the conditions existing; that the policy outlined by Admiral Sims from the time of his first message on April 14th, 1917, and the measures long recommended by him were adopted by the Navy Department and carried out to the limit and extent, which the material and personnel resources of the Navy permitted.

A few of the typical cases cited by Admiral Sims fully illustrate this situation. In his first message of April 14th, 1917, and in all his later messages, Admiral Sims pointed out that the German submarines, through their sinkings of merchant tonnage, were rapidly cutting the Allied lines of communication on all fronts. If the tonnage losses continued, the length of the war was a matter of arithmetical calculation; the Allies would have been forced to sue for peace because of the insufficiency of tonnage to import the necessary supplies for their armies and the food for their

populations. All help from the United States which might later become available, would be vain unless the Navy, by throwing immediately the maximum number of anti-submarine craft into the war zone, could succeed, in co-operation with the Allies, in defeating the submarine campaign. These recommendations apparently had but little effect upon the Navy Department. It was nearly a month after war began before the Navy Department even formulated a plan for sending abroad more than one division of destroyers. After Ambassador Page's message of April 27, 1917, the Department, in a cable to Admiral Sims of May 3rd, stated that ultimately thirty-six destroyers would be sent, but it was not stated when they would be sent nor whether any other anti-submarine craft would be available.

In his cable of April 14th, 1917, and in dozens of other messages sent in April, May, June and July, 1917, Admiral Sims pointed out that any light craft would be of value in combating submarines, and urged that the maximum number of such craft be sent, stating that the Navy Department could not send "too soon or too many."

In May, 1917, the Department, at the request of the French Ministry of Marine, decided to send a few yachts to the French coast. In June, Admiral Sims was informed that a few fishing vessels would be sent in August to the French coast, but during April, May and June Admiral Sims received no reply to his repeated requests for such light forces as tugs, submarines, revenue cutters, gunboats, yachts, and light cruisers.

An examination of the records shows that on July 1st, 1917, three months after war began, there were actually on duty in anti-submarine work in the war zone only twenty-eight United States destroyers and no other light craft of any sort, although the Navy then had over 100 suitable vessels. After Admiral Mayo's visit abroad, and still more after Admiral Benson's visit with the House Mission, the Navy

Department appears to have realized the importance of sending anti-submarine craft, and to have decided (six months after the war began) upon the policy of sending all available light craft to the war zone and of accelerating the construction of additional anti-submarine craft. There had been a delay of at least six months in accepting recommendations whose soundness should have been apparent from the first.

Although the Department had been, since April, 1917, fully informed of the fact that destroyers were the greatest enemy of the submarine and the most effective protection to shipping, it was not until six months later, in October, 1917, that the Department obtained from Congress the funds for additional destroyers. Yet war had been imminent for some months before April, 1917, and Congress and the country had displayed the greatest willingness to provide such funds as the emergency required.

II

A review of the measures taken against the German submarines in the war shows that the most effective means used of saving shipping and of defeating the submarine campaign were the increase of anti-submarine craft in the war zone and the adoption of the convoy system. Admiral Sims showed by the evidence of official records that the Navy Department delayed the adoption of the convoy system, in the early and critical months of the war, in exactly the same way and apparently with as little justification as in the case of the delay in sending anti-submarine craft. The Allies had had the convoy system under consideration before the United States entered the war. Apart from the objection of the ship owners and ship captains, the chief reason the Allies had not adopted it was the lack of the necessary anti-submarine craft for escorting the convoys in the war

zone. Admiral Sims repeatedly pointed out to the Department in May and June, 1917, that the adoption of the convoy system would mean the defeat of the submarine, as it would protect shipping and compel the submarines to attack anti-submarine craft in order to carry out their mission of destroying commerce. He explained also that the adoption of the convoy system depended upon the supplying of cruisers for ocean escort by the United States and upon the furnishing of additional destroyers and other light craft for escort in the submarine zone. This was fully established by a letter from Admiral Jellicoe to Admiral Sims of July 11th, 1917, quoted by Admiral Sims in his testimony.

On May 1st, 1917, Admiral Sims informed the Department that the Allies were prepared to adopt the convoy system, but that help would be needed from the United States to the extent of fourteen cruisers for ocean convoy work and additional light forces for escort in the submarine zone. At about the same period the British Admiralty submitted, through their Attaché in Washington, the complete plans for the convoy system. On May 25th Admiral Sims informed the Department of the successful arrival of the first convoys. No answer was received to his repeated and extremely urgent cables recommending the adoption of the convoy system until June 20th, and this answer was only a casual reference in a cable from the Department, the concluding sentence of which read: "With regard to convoy I consider that American vessels having armed guards are safer when sailing independently."

On July 5th, the Department indicated their willingness to assign seven cruisers (instead of the fourteen requested) for the protection of convoys, but still resisted the adoption of the convoy system and proposed various alternatives, designed to protect American shipping alone, rather than the indispensable lines of communications upon which depended the victory of the Allied cause as a whole. Admiral

Sims' cables at the end of June and the beginning of July pointed this out in the strongest possible terms.

Even as late as August 10th, a departmental cable to Admiral Sims indicated that they had not yet adopted the convoy system fully, but had restricted their efforts to "advising" American ships to sail in convoy. The convoys from America were not inaugurated definitely until September, four months after the Department's co-operation had been first recommended. The attitude of the Department resulted in a minimum delay of at least three months in the establishment of the convoy system in the Atlantic.

The importance of the convoy system in saving tonnage was emphasized by Admiral Sims in his testimony.

"Before leaving the question of this convoy system, I wish to clear up a misunderstanding which seems to have gotten abroad, to the effect that I was more concerned with the safety of foreign shipping than I was for that of our own. What I was after was winning the war; and, as I have clearly shown above, during the period under discussion, this question was wholly bound up in the saving of shipping. It was not American shipping, or British shipping, or French and Italian shipping, but it was ALLIED SHIPPING. It was the vital shipping of the team which was lined up against the enemy.

"As a matter of fact, United States shipping was a very small proportion of the whole in those critical days. For example, in July, 1917, there were a maximum of about 160 arrivals and departures per month, in the war zone, of American owned ships. Consider this number against over 3,000 arrivals and departures of British vessels alone. Even such a comparison does not include the large number of British and French vessels which were necessarily moving in the war zone, practically all of their time, while our vessels were on the high seas a good share of their time, well clear of the submarine zone. The traffic up and down the French coast, carrying many supplies upon which the French armies were absolutely dependent, was never out of the war zone at all. I think it would be a safe estimate that, during those

critical months, not more than five per cent. of the arrivals and departures in the war zone were American ships.

"I have before me figures showing that as late as fifteen months after we entered the war, American shipping was less than twelve per cent. of the total making up the Allied lines of communication.

"It is very difficult for me now to convey to you the atmosphere which existed at that time, and the real state of desperation in which I found myself almost daily, during those early months of the war. It should be noted that the cause of this was not a single matter, such as the failure to act upon my convoy recommendations, but that in a dozen different matters, at the same time, I was faced with the same situation, always hoping from day to day that the Department would finally realize the situation, and either accept the recommendations, or send over somebody in whose judgment they could trust. And I again wish to reiterate that there is no question as to whether these recommendations were right. THE FACT REMAINS THAT THEY WERE VIRTUALLY ALL ADOPTED IN THE END.

"I could read you, for the next week, copies of letters and cables sent by me in regard to the inauguration and control of the convoy system, but that would hardly contribute further to an understanding of this matter. I think that enough has been said to show that what I wrote in my letter of January 7th, 1920, was a very mild statement of the serious embarrassments and delays in putting into effect the convoy system, which was the most important of all the measures used in defeating the submarine campaign against Allied shipping."

III

Delays, caused by the Department's failure to act promptly, occurred not only in the case of sending of anti-submarine craft to Europe and in the establishment of the convoy system, but also in putting into effect a policy of thorough and hearty co-operation with the Allies; in sending specific reinforcements requested by the Allies; in establishing abroad an advance headquarters of the Navy

Department to represent the Department adequately with the Allies, to gain all information available concerning war experience for the benefit of the Department, and to make possible a more effective use of the naval forces in the war zone; and in sending a sufficient number of trained officers to assist Admiral Sims in order to permit him to carry out effectively the mission assigned him.

The messages submitted in evidence by Admiral Sims, that were exchanged with the Department from April to October, 1917, show clearly that at that time the Department was not co-operating whole-heartedly with the Allies. They were being informed almost daily by their representative abroad that a very much greater degree of assistance from the United States was necessary if the German submarine campaign were to be checked. Instead of accepting these recommendations, the Department was eagerly grasping at any suggestions or requests, made by local Allied authorities in Washington, which seemed to demand a lesser measure of co-operation.

Even after the return of Admiral Mayo to the United States in October, 1917, a policy of full co-operation was not put into effect. It was necessary for Admiral Benson to go abroad himself and to confirm with his own eyes and ears the recommendations of Admirals Sims and Mayo before the Department could be convinced of the necessity of a full and hearty co-operation with the Allies. It was only after Admiral Benson had himself discussed the naval situation with the Allies' leaders that many measures which had been recommended for months by Admiral Sims were finally agreed to and put into effect by the Navy Department.

IV

The Allies had suggested to Admiral Sims in April, 1917, that some of the American dreadnaughts be sent abroad in

order to obviate and counter any attacks by German heavy forces in the Channel. The Department never even replied to this recommendation.

After a conference with Admiral Beatty and Admiral Jellicoe in July, Admiral Sims on July 21st recommended that a reinforcement of dreadnaughts be sent by the United States to join the Grand Fleet, as conditions in the British Navy made it necessary to put out of commission certain of their older ships and replace them by a division of dreadnaughts from the Grand Fleet. Admiral Sims' cable was not even answered. A month later, on repeating his recommendation, the Department disapproved it. Admiral Mayo, in his report of October, 1917, recommended that these dreadnaughts be sent to the Grand Fleet, but still the recommendation was disapproved. When Admiral Benson went abroad in November, it took him but a few hours in conference with the British admirals to convince himself of the need of this reinforcement. He immediately recommended it and the recommendation was approved by the Department without question.

Similarly, the Allies had pointed out to Admiral Sims in April the great service that tugs would render in towing sailing ships through the war zone and in taking into port ships that had been torpedoed and damaged. Admiral Sims, therefore, asked for tugs in a series of messages, pointing out that these tugs would save a great deal of merchant shipping and would release anti-submarine craft for other more important duties, such as escorting convoys. No answer was made to Admiral Sims' recommendations until August. In August the Navy Department announced that twelve tugs would be sent, but in December none of these tugs had yet been sent, nor had any information regarding them been received in London. In reply to renewed requests from Admiral Sims for tugs, the Department in December finally took up with the Shipping Board the question of

having additional tugs built. It was not until February, 1918, that the first two tugs finally arrived in European waters. Up to the time of the armistice only twelve had arrived.

Admiral Sims had pointed out in his first letter report of April 19, 1917, the value of submarines in anti-submarine work. In June he had specifically recommended the sending of submarines to the Irish coast and in July, to the Azores. No action was taken by the Department, or at least Admiral Sims was informed of none. In August, Admiral Mayo, while abroad, cabled to the Department endorsing Admiral Sims' recommendation and in reply to his message the Department finally agreed, in September, to send submarines. The first of these vessels did not arrive at the Azores until the end of October, and it was not until January that the division assigned to the Irish coast arrived at Berehaven.

Many other similar cases were referred to in Admiral Sims' testimony, fully substantiating the charge in his letter of January 7th that the Department delayed sending reinforcements to the Allies for months during the most critical period of the war.

V

The failure to co-operate heartily with the Allies and the delay in getting into action during the first months of the war are also strikingly illustrated by the Department's failure to send officers to assist Admiral Sims. Inasmuch as Washington lay 3,000 miles distant from the submarine zone, as the nature of the submarine war had not been foreseen and was not fully understood in Washington, and as the developments from day to day could not possibly be followed fully from Washington, it should have seemed obvious to the Department that the only means of effectively cooperating with the Allies was to establish abroad an advance headquarters which would be in daily personal contact with

the heads of the various Allied navies, which should make a full study of the situation from day to day, and should forward recommendations based upon this information to Washington.

From the time of his arrival in England, Admiral Sims urged this measure on the Department. For four months the Department left his recommendations either altogether without answer or with an abrupt disapproval. Cable after cable requesting officers were ignored or disapproved. Every effort that Admiral Sims made to obtain help was checked by the Department. For four months the whole burden of studying the three years of Allied war experience, of providing for the general co-operation of the United States naval forces with those of the Allies, and of making a study of the strategical situation, upon which recommendations could be based, fell upon Admiral Sims and his one aide, Commander Babcock. In July an experienced chief of staff was sent him and several other younger officers, not of the type nor of the experience required by the task. It was not until after Admiral Benson had himself seen the situation that the Department finally approved the sending of an adequate number of experienced officers to make possible the establishment of a real advance headquarters of the Navy in Europe. There was thus a delay of eight months in sending abroad the officers absolutely indispensable to the work there.

VI

The results of the failure to follow sound military principles and to profit by the experience and advice of the Allies are clearly shown in the mistakes made by the Department in attempting to formulate detailed plans and to direct actual operations in the war zone from Washington without having the complete information upon which such plans and operations must necessarily be based.

The Department resorted to the use of many different and uncertain channels of information of varying degrees of reliability. The Allied naval attachés in Washington were consulted about the same matters concerning which Admiral Sims was carrying on conferences and negotiations with the heads of the Allied navies.

Young armed guard officers were given orders to collect, in the week or ten days of their stay in port in England or France, a vast amount of information concerning war operations and experience, which was obviously beyond their capacity in the limited time at their disposal and with the limited opportunities they had of checking and verifying information.

The Department often based their action upon the recommendations of the Allied attachés or of these armed guard officers or of young Allied liaison officers who happened to be in Washington, even when the recommendations or information obtained from these sources differed from that submitted by Admiral Sims. Admiral Sims was in no case informed as to what information the Department was obtaining from these other sources, as to whether their recommendations were in conflict with his own, nor as to the action which the Department took upon this information. The result was necessarily a confusion, which contributed to the process of delaying the action of the Navy Department in getting effectively into the war.

The documentary evidence submitted directs attention to a very grave military mistake committed by the Department, that is, their apparent lack of confidence in the representative they had sent abroad, their refusal to heed the recommendations submitted by him, and their failure to support him with the personnel and forces which were available.

If Admiral Sims was not qualified in the eyes of the Department for the mission which they had assigned him, if he did not adequately carry out his task after he was sent

abroad, if his recommendations were considered untrustworthy, there should not have been a moment's delay in recalling him from his mission and in replacing him by an officer who did have the full confidence of the Department. If, on the other hand, the Department regarded Admiral Sims as having the qualifications, which the Secretary of the Navy has repeatedly attributed to him in his annual reports and other public documents, the failure of the Department to support him is not capable of explanation or justification and can only be considered as a grave military error.

The adoption, after long months of delay, of Admiral Sims' recommendations in every important instance, shows that the Department finally recognized their soundness. The failure to support adequately Admiral Sims, to give his recommendations the "serious and immediate attention" which the Secretary of the Navy had promised in his cablegram of April 16th, 1917, and the delays which resulted from this failure, were as inexcusable as they are inexplicable.

VII

The documents submitted by Admiral Sims show that the Department at no time informed him of their plans, if any such existed, for operations in the war zone. Agreements as to the disposition of forces in European waters were made with the Allies without any reference to Admiral Sims. In many cases the Department did not even inform him of the decisions reached. This happened, for example, in the case of the establishment of bases on the French coast. The Department decided upon such action to meet a request from the French Ministry of Marine, but no information as to the decision was ever sent to Admiral Sims beyond a mere request as to what the character of these bases should be. Officers were sent to command non-existent bases. The

French Government, like Admiral Sims, had no information as to the Department's intentions. The greatest confusion resulted.

The decision to send forces to the French coast was similarly made in Washington, in May, 1917, but Admiral Sims was not officially informed of the Department's action until some days after the forces had actually arrived in French waters in July.

The first aviation unit sent to France in June, 1917, in response to a request from a French representative in America, and concerning which the Ministry of Marine seems not to have been informed, was similarly made without reference to Admiral Sims. Neither he nor the French knew of it until the unit arrived at Brest.

The decision to send a patrol force to Gibraltar was reached in Washington without the matter having been discussed with Admiral Sims.

Forces were sent to the Azores by the Department and arrived there before Admiral Sims had been notified even of the intention of the Department, and for two months he was not informed as to the mission of the forces, nor of whether or not they would operate under his command. These forces arrived in the Azores in a foreign port without the local authorities having received information of their coming or without any diplomatic arrangements having been made for their reception.

Admiral Sims was not informed of the sailing of the first troop convoy until after all plans had been made and the expedition was nearly ready to sail.

In many cases he was not informed of the sailing of vessels to the war zone to join his command until some days, or, in some cases, weeks after they had actually sailed, as in the case of several of the destroyer divisions that sailed in May, the yachts which sailed in June, the *Dixie* which ar-

rived at Queenstown in June, the destroyers sent to the Azores in July and many other cases cited in Admiral Sims' testimony.

During May, June and July Admiral Sims had repeatedly requested the Department for information as to the Department's plans and intentions. He had repeatedly and specifically pointed out the necessity of having adequate advance information of the sailings of vessels to European waters. The Department completely ignored these requests and denied him information necessary to a proper handling of his forces and to an effective co-operation with the Allies, to an extent almost beyond belief.

VIII

A review of Admiral Sims' testimony thus reveals a number of very grave violations of sound and accepted military principles by the Navy Department in its conduct of the war. The Department failed for many months, as a result of the unpreparedness of naval vessels and of the lack of any policy or any adequate plans, to exert the naval power of the United States offensively against the enemy and thus ignored one of the most important of all factors in war, the time element. They failed to give their representative abroad any definite instructions or to define his responsibilities and to delegate to him the necessary and definite authority. During the early and most critical months they failed to support him by sending the forces or personnel which his position required and which were available. They neglected to keep him informed of their own decisions and actions affecting the operations in the war zone, and thus created confusion.

In addition to the errors just outlined, the Department committed other grave mistakes resulting from these errors just mentioned. As a result of a lack of adequate informa-

tion concerning war operations, the Department violated the strategic principle of concentration of forces in the critical area, which is the most fundamental principle of military strategy. The Navy Department for many months held back forces from the war zone and kept them uselessly patrolling the Atlantic coast, three thousand miles from the nearest submarine. The Navy Department was apparently misled by enemy propaganda, and carried out that very dispersal of forces from the critical area which the enemy desired. Nor was this tendency of the Department to disperse forces from the critical area limited solely to holding back forces on the United States coast.

The Department was greatly influenced in its decisions throughout the war by sporadic enemy diversions in many different areas. Thus, in April, May and July, 1917, the Department proposed sending destroyers and patrol vessels to the Arctic coast to meet sporadic enemy operations there, called to their attention by the Russian government. In July, as a result of a bombardment of a port in the Azores, the Department sent a force of destroyers to those islands, although they had been informed that in such an area destroyers would be practically useless. In 1918, enemy submarine cruises in the Canary Islands, the Madeira Islands and off Liberia led the Department to propose to send additional forces to these far-flung areas. The decision to send a considerable force to Gibraltar was apparently based, not upon any complete review of the military situation and on the decision to concentrate forces in the critical area revealed by this review, but on the desire of the Department to meet the activity of the submarines in an area distant from the most critical area but one through which a certain number of American ships were passing. In 1918, when submarines finally appeared on the American coast, new destroyers were held back from the war zone for some months in a vain effort to meet these submarine diversions, although

the futility of the employment of destroyers for such a purpose in such an area had been clearly demonstrated by all Allied military experience.

This dispersal of forces from the critical area by the Department was obviously merely a result of an even greater error, that is, the tendency of the Department, already pointed out, to make all decisions in Washington and to direct all military operations, even in details, from Washington. Thus, the forces sent to the Azores, were given instructions from Washington, and Admiral Sims was not informed of what these instructions were until six weeks after their arrival in the Azores. When it was decided to send submarines to the Azores in October, Admiral Sims was informed that they were to operate under instructions drawn up in Washington. In the case even of the formation of a yacht squadron for a special service on the French coast, the Department required a full explanation of how this yacht squadron was constituted and what its mission was. In the case of the first troop convoy, the Department attempted to provide in Washington for all the details of the operations of the convoy and its escorts in the war zone, and only good fortune saved the convoy from a disaster which such a method of directing active military operations from a distance of 3,000 miles might easily have produced. Many other similar cases were brought out by the documentary evidence introduced by Admiral Sims. All show the Department's desire to interfere in the details of military operations in the war zone; and a disregard of principles whose soundness has been recognized since the beginning of the study of warfare.

IX

The Department attempted to formulate in Washington detailed plans for war operations, although the formulation of such detailed plans — as opposed to the formulation of the

general basic plan, which they neglected entirely — depended upon having full information concerning the military situation from day to day in Europe and upon having available all Allied war experience in the three years previous to the entry of the United States into the war. Previous to our entry into the war American naval officers in general, and the Navy Department in particular, had very insufficient and inadequate knowledge of war developments and of the war situation as a whole. Admiral Sims had found it necessary to revise all of his own opinions concerning the situation, because he found that the conditions were utterly different than he had anticipated. Yet, in spite of the incompleteness of their information, and in spite of their failure to draw up the general plans which were needed and which they could have formulated, the Department endeavoured to draw up detailed plans for operations in the war zone. Failing to realize the actual situation abroad, the Department wasted months of effort in endeavouring to find the " royal road to victory." To this end they proposed a close blockade of German ports, on April 17th, 1917, a proposal which they themselves declared to be impracticable on October 21st, 1917, after they had been provided with the full information concerning it, which they had lacked at the time they suggested their plan.

Similarly, on May 11th, 1917, the Department proposed a barrier across the North Sea, to be composed of mines, mine nets and patrol craft, which would have required a prohibitive amount of material for execution and which, if undertaken, at that time when the German submarines were still unchecked in their attacks upon shipping, would have led to such a diversion of effort, on the part of the Allies, from the critical area that the Germans would easily have won the war in a few months.

The Department, in complete and total ignorance of Allied experience with regard to troop convoys, drew up the details

of the plan of the first troop convoy, with the result that the most lamentable confusion occurred when the convoy arrived in European waters, a confusion which the Department themselves recognized. They then called upon Admiral Sims to draw up and submit recommendations for the handling of all future troop convoys. These recommendations they adopted, and it was upon these plans, formulated in London and based upon Allied war experience, that the troop transport operations for the remaining period of the war were carried on.

The Department proposed various plans as substitutes for the convoy system; for example, their plan for arming American merchant ships. This was an effective measure even so far as American shipping alone is concerned only so long as the submarines attempted to attack with gunfire. It was not an adequate answer to the submarine campaign, because, even if successfully carried out, it would have protected only American ships and not the whole of the Allies lines of communication. Furthermore, the submarines, by resorting to torpedo attack, could and did easily sink armed ships.

The Department also proposed a new plan for routing ships as an alternative to convoy, a plan which Allied war experience showed to be unsound.

In July, 1917, the Department proposed to establish a protective steamship lane leading into the focus of shipping in the eastern Atlantic with a double row of patrol craft cruising ceaselessly back and forth to protect this line, a scheme so ridiculous that it need not be discussed.

Even as late as 1918, the Department still evidenced a tendency to draw up plans based on insufficient information, and to insist upon carrying them out. This happened in the case of the plans drawn up to meet a possible battle-cruiser raid against the convoys in the Atlantic. This problem had been presented to the Department in the fall of 1917. The planning section of the naval headquarters abroad, after a

full discussion with the Allied authorities, had submitted a plan, in April, 1918, providing for such a contingency. The Department in July drew up an entirely different plan, and for two months, although this plan was shown to be impracticable, insisted upon it.

These cases, which were fully established by the documents introduced, proved the violation by the Department of principles which even ordinary common-sense demonstrates; that is, that plans cannot be drawn up without full and adequate information and without full discussion with the responsible authorities familiar with war experience. The Department itself recognized theoretically the soundness of this principle in a cable to Admiral Sims of July, 1917, but, nevertheless, failed to act in the manner which such a recognition should have required. The plans drawn up were often logical enough, but were based upon unsound premises, due to a lack of information concerning actual conditions or to ignorance of war experience. These two features were inevitable in any attempt at Washington to formulate such detailed plans.

At no time did Admiral Sims question the authority of the Department or the necessity of having the ultimate decision made by the Navy Department. His recommendations were designed merely to provide the Department with an adequate machinery by which the available information could be made use of in the formulation of plans to be submitted to the Department for its consideration and approval.

X

Admiral Sims did not attribute the responsibility for such delays to the Navy itself. On the contrary he pointed out that:

"The Navy's splendid achievements in the war were in spite of delays, inaction, and violation of military principles by the high command in the first months of war. Of course, when once

the available naval forces for operations afloat and a sufficient number of capable officers to administer these forces, to control their operations and to co-ordinate our activities with those of the Allies were available, there could be no longer any question of the effectiveness of our help. The Allies themselves have repeatedly assured us of the vital services rendered by our Navy to the allied cause, and we of the Navy can take pride in the record that was achieved. Great as this record was, I think I have said enough to convince you that it would have been infinitely more effective, if the policies ultimately adopted by the Navy, and which can be found set forth in the Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report of 1918 had been put into effect from the moment when we entered the war instead of after a dangerous delay of many months.

" Furthermore, it seems to me that these achievements of the Navy should gain greater importance in the public mind when it is realized, as has not been generally realized, outside of the service, that they were accomplished not because of an equal amount of efficiency in the higher command which directed them, but rather in spite of long delays, inaction, and violations of fundamental military principles committed by the high command in the first months of the war. In other words, the personnel of our Navy afloat, in accomplishing the mission assigned them had to struggle with the enemy and also endure the handicap of an uncertain policy and of misdirection such as I have repeatedly pointed out in the cases which I have reviewed before this committee."

XI

In concluding his testimony before the committee, Admiral Sims summarized the points he had made. He also again emphasized the fact that he was not " attacking " the Navy or any one in the Navy, but was solely concerned with preventing in the future the repetition of the unpreparedness, and of the delays and blunders of 1917.

" I have now concluded my introduction of testimony and documentary evidence in substantiation of the statements made in

my letter to the Navy Department, of January 7th, 1920, regarding the military errors committed by the Navy Department in the initiation and conduct of the war. The official documentary evidence incorporated in the hearings establishes the following facts:

" 1. That, in spite of the fact that war had been going on for nearly three years, and our entry into it had been imminent at least from February 2, 1917, the vessels of the Navy were not ready for war service when the United States entered.

" 2. That the first few months after America entered the war were extremely critical ones for the whole allied cause, due to the success of enemy submarines.

" 3. That this critical situation was made clear to the Navy Department a few days after America entered the war, and repeatedly thereafter by cables and letters, and supported by independent advices to the government from the American Ambassador in London and by Mr. Hoover in person.

" 4. That the Navy Department supplied me with no plans or policy covering our participation in the war for three months after our entry therein.

" 5. That, having information as to the critical situation of the Allies, the Navy Department did not promptly assist them, and thereby prolonged the war by delaying the sending of anti-submarine vessels, none reaching Europe for nearly a month after war was declared, and three months elapsing before thirty vessels arrived.

" 6. That, the Navy Department failed to appreciate the military value of time.

" 7. That the Navy Department violated fundamental military principles in attempting to formulate war plans of operations without having sufficient knowledge of the whole situation.

" 8. That the Department's representative with the allied admiralties was not supported, during the most critical months of the war, either by the adequate personnel or by the adequate forces that could have been supplied.

" 9. That the Navy Department violated fundamental military principles in dispersing forces away from the critical area in order to meet diversions of the enemy.

" 10. That the Navy Department, in the first months of the war, attempted the direction of details although three thousand miles distant from the scene of active operations, where the situation was changing from day to day.

" 11. That the Navy Department, in not clearly defining the responsibility and delegating authority to its representative in Europe, failed to follow sound principles, common alike to the business and military professions.

" 12. That the Navy Department, by controlling the operations and movements of certain forces within the war area, violated the fundamental military principle of unity of command.

" 13. That the Navy Department failed to keep its representative abroad completely informed as to its plans affecting dispatch and disposition of forces in the war zone, and frequently reached decisions in such matters through information gained from sources other than its representative in the war zone.

" In no part of my testimony have I charged the responsibility for any of the failures enumerated against any person, but I have tried to make it clear that the responsibility for these failures rests, in my opinion, upon the Navy Department as an organization rather than upon any individual. If any individual was responsible, wholly or in part, for the failures I have pointed out, the fact would necessarily have to be developed by persons who were in a position to know the inner workings of the Department during the period in question. My official knowledge extends only to the doors of the Department and not beyond them. The fact that numerous letters and cable despatches which I have submitted in evidence bear the signature of this or that person, is not to be taken as an indication that I believe the signer personally responsible for the action indicated. They merely indicate that the letter or despatch was official and written with the authority of the Navy Department as an organization.

" To point out violations of well known and generally accepted principles of warfare such as have been shown by my testimony is in itself to suggest the remedy, which is obviously to avoid such violations in the future. It not having been shown up to this stage of the investigation whether these violations of principle were due to faulty organization of the Navy Department or to

faults of personnel I am not, at present, able to submit well-founded recommendations looking to the adoption of measures to insure us against similar violations in the future.

" My testimony has been devoted almost entirely to pointing out defects in the administration of the Navy in the first few months of the war. This does not mean that I have been insensible to the splendid work done by the Navy at large or by the bureaus and other offices of the Navy Department. I have, at different times, in letters to the Chiefs of the Bureaus of the Navy Department, and to other officials, including the Chief of Naval Operations, expressed my personal satisfaction at the splendid way in which many of my requests had been met, particularly during the latter part of the war.

" Taking the service as a whole, I have the most profound admiration for the manner in which the officers and men of the regular Navy, Naval Militia and Reserve Force carried on their duties in this war, and have expressed this admiration in a series of articles now being published. Not only from the war zone, where events were constantly before me, but from home and remote areas, reports reached me which showed, beyond any doubt, what a magnificent body of officers and men we had in the Navy. You may be sure, gentlemen, that the Navy, if loyally and properly supported and directed, may be counted upon to maintain the finest traditions of the service.

" It is a source of the greatest pleasure to testify to the pride and gratitude I feel for the manner in which the Naval Militia and the Reserves (in many instances at great personal sacrifices) came to the aid and support of the regular Navy. Without their invaluable help much of the work done by the Navy in this war could not have been undertaken. It would require volumes to tell the hundreds of ways in which their splendid services made success possible. The outstanding feature of their service was the cheerful and loyal support which they gave to the regular Navy at all times and under all conditions. I cannot commend too highly their services to the nation.

" It is furthermore a great pleasure and satisfaction to me to be able to testify to the magnificent way in which the many enterprises were undertaken and pushed to a successful completion by

the united efforts of the bureaus of the Navy Department, and the naval personnel engaged in the operations. I cannot pretend to enumerate completely the operations of this nature which contributed to the winning of the war. I may mention, as typical examples, the Northern Barrage, the Railway Batteries, the transport of troops, and the training of officers and men in the ships of the Atlantic Fleet that remained in home waters.

" It is, of course, to be expected in connection with an investigation of this sort, particularly of a war which was won by great sacrifices and gallant, patriotic services of the entire nation, that the first thought which occurs to mind is that hindsight is better than foresight, and that it is always easy, in the light of hindsight, to point out errors committed in any undertaking. I submit, however, that, as the issue here under investigation is one vitally affecting our future national safety, we should not let such thoughts carry us away and blind us to dangers which the lessons of the past have clearly indicated. *Hindsight must not be blindsight.*

" I wish also to repeat and to emphasize at this time that no claim is made that my recommendations or advice should have been accepted because they were mine, but they should have been heeded and acted upon because of my position in continuous consultation with the heads of the allied navies. There should be no question as to whether I merited the confidence of my superiors. If I did not. then an additional violation of a fundamental military and business principle was committed in leaving me at my post. I should have been removed as soon as there was the slightest loss of confidence in me.

" If I have shown that there was a lack of conviction or clear understanding on the part of theNavy Department as to where its efforts should be directed,— if I have shown that the Navy was hampered by a lack of preparedness, by lack of essential plans, and by being held back in the beginning,— if I have demonstrated that victory was won not because of these errors but in spite of them, and that such errors were only nullified by a combination of circumstances which we would be foolhardy indeed to count upon in the future,— then I will feel that I have been fully justified in submitting my letter of January 7th, 1920."

CHAPTER IX

CAMOUFLAGE AND COUNTER-BARRAGE TACTICS

(The Cross-Examination of Admiral Sims)

I

ADMIRAL SIMS finished his direct testimony on March 18, 1920. On Monday, March 22, 1920, his cross-examination began. This was conducted chiefly by the Democratic members of the committee, Senators Pittman and Trammell. The methods followed by Senator Pittman, who was apparently acting as unofficial counsel for Secretary Daniels, at once revealed both the tactics to be followed by the Secretary in meeting the criticisms, and the indisputable accuracy of the statements and criticisms of Admiral Sims.

During the whole of the cross-examination one of Mr. Daniels' secretaries sat behind Senator Pittman and repeatedly handed him questions to be asked of Admiral Sims that the Secretary apparently thought would be damaging to the Admiral.

It is significant that in the cross-examination no serious effort was made to question the truth of Admiral Sims' criticisms. So fully established were these by the documentary evidence that it was impossible, even for Senator Pittman, to doubt their correctness. Unable to meet the issues raised, Senator Pittman adopted the methods used by Mr. Daniels, and endeavoured to distract attention from uncomfortable facts by introducing confidential and personal papers of Admiral Sims which seemed to afford an opportunity to at-

tack him for pro-British sympathies, for alleged criticism of the Army, and for his estimate of the results of the unpreparedness and vacillation of the Navy Department.

II

The only part of Admiral Sims testimony which was questioned, in fact, was his assumption that the Navy Department had been responsible for the prolongation of the war. The unpreparedness for war, the delays in beginning active operations in the war zone, the vacillation and hesitation of the Navy Department in 1917, were tacitly admitted, not only by Senator Pittman, but by every witness who appeared before the Committee, save the Secretary himself. Senator Pittman and the Departmental witnesses limited themselves to contending that the conditions described by Admiral Sims did not have as serious consequences as he believed, that they were the inevitable result of our national policy from 1914 to 1916, that no one was to blame for the mistakes, and that every one in the Department did their utmost, after April 6, 1917, to win the war.

Senator Pittman, like Mr. Daniels and his naval witnesses, attempted, by the emphasizing undoubted successes of the Navy itself, to obscure or excuse the activities and lack of effective action of the Navy Department.

Primarily, Senator Pittman's tactics, like those of Mr. Daniels, were of the " smoke screen " variety. In the cross-examination of Admiral Sims the Senator endeavoured to fix upon him responsibility for the publication of the letter of January 7th; to make it appear that he was so pro-British during the war as to turn over our naval forces entirely to the British and to criticize the American Army; to discredit criticism by attacks on the critic.

III

Senator Hale began the cross-examination by asking Admiral Sims who it was that gave him the "wool pulling" instructions quoted in paragraph 7 of the letter of January 7, 1920.

In reply Admiral Sims related the circumstances under which he was sent abroad in March, 1917. He had received orders at Newport to go to Washington. He was not to report at the Navy Department, but was to telephone the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. He was unable to get the telephone connection and so went to Admiral Palmer's office. Palmer told him he was "to be sent abroad to confer with the Allied admiralties. He said that I was to go secretly, under an assumed name, and not even to take uniforms with me."

Admiral Sims then had a brief interview with Secretary Daniels. "In substance the Secretary said that I was being sent abroad to confer with the admiralties on the other side and to use the cable freely in advising them (the Navy Department) as to how they could best co-operate with the Allied navies in case we were unfortunately drawn into the war. He also told me that the reason I was being sent over was because of a request from the then Ambassador in London, Dr. Page, that an officer of high rank should be there. . . . In his testimony on the awards, the Secretary of the Navy stated that he had reminded me of the indiscretion that I had committed in 1910 in the speech at the Guildhall. The Secretary's recollection on that point is thoroughly mistaken. No reference whatever was made to the Guildhall speech by anybody in the Navy Department on this occasion."

After Admiral Sims left the Secretary's office he went to Admiral Palmer's office. There in the presence of Admiral Palmer he was admonished by a certain official not to "let

the British pull the wool over your eyes. It is none of our business pulling their chestnuts out of the fire. We would as soon fight the British as the Germans."

Admiral Sims said that he was reluctant to name the official. "As I said before, I wanted to avoid all personalities, and I should much prefer now to relate the incident and explain why I put it in my letter, without referring to the name of the individual."

The Chairman, however, insisted that "the name of the individual should be brought out and the Committee would like to have you give it."

"*Admiral Sims:* The person who gave me the admonition was Admiral Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations. . . . The remark was preceded by nothing and was followed by nothing. It was told to me in all seriousness and with bitterness, and I turned around and left the office immediately."

Admiral Palmer was present and heard Admiral Benson give this admonition to Admiral Sims.

The next day (March 29, 1917) Admiral Sims returned to the Navy Department to get some papers.

"I met Admiral Benson again, and in the presence of a number of officers . . . he repeated to me exactly the same remark, preceded by nothing or followed by nothing . . . About six months later in my office in Paris, he made a similar statement, at least to the effect that I was not to allow the British to pull the wool over my eyes or to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. . . . I regarded this as a personal idiosyncrasy of the Admiral. I had known that he was intensely anti-British, but it did not affect me particularly."

In speaking further of Admiral Benson's attitude, Admiral Sims said:

"I would also like to say that I have always had the best possible relations with Admiral Benson. I regard him as an upstanding and honest man who has exceedingly strong convictions,

and who is very firm in adherence to these convictions. I believe everything he has done during the war has been done conscientiously, and to get along with the war. I believe that it is due to Admiral Benson alone that I was given the opportunity to serve in this war as the commander of the forces abroad. In fact, he told me that his insistence upon my being put in command of those forces abroad had brought upon him the enmity of pretty much all the senior officers of the Navy, that being due to the fact that when I was appointed I was the last name on the list of rear admirals in the Naval Register at that time. I state this in order to make it clear that there is nothing whatever personal about this.

"Now, my reason for putting it in the letter may not be so clear to a civilian as it is to a military man, but the spiritual foundation of every war is the will to victory, and if any man, no matter how honest, has an invincible prejudice against the people that we are fighting alongside of, it is very probable that it has an unconscious influence upon him; and that is the reason that in submitting this letter for the consideration of the Navy Department, I put that in there, as one of the most important things in the letter, that if ever we go into a war again we want to make sure that the spiritual foundation of our organization, the will to victory, is sound."

In concluding his statement with regard to his instructions, Admiral Sims commented upon Secretary Daniels' assertion during the Medal Awards investigation that "as a naval officer he (Sims) had no business to think who was the enemy." "That to me is a perfectly astounding statement. I received no instructions, I received no expression of policy. Manifestly, no plan can be based upon anything except the knowledge of who your enemy is going to be; and I had every possible reason to think who my enemy was."

IV

Senator Pittman in beginning his examination of Admiral Sims took up the question of the responsibility for the pub-

lication by the *Washington Post* on January 14th of the existence and character of the letter of January 7th, 1920.

Admiral Sims testified that he had kept the only file copy of the letter in his personal possession, that only a half dozen naval officers of his staff and his wife knew of its existence until the *Washington Post* article was published, and that these had all kept the existence of the letter secret. He had shown the letter to H. P. Davison, but this was not until the evening of January 14th. He had read the letter to the committee on January 17th, only after the chairman had insisted that he do this. The existence of the letter had probably become known in the Department. The correspondent of the *Washington Post* doubtless had channels of information through which he got his information. This correspondent stated that he had not learned of the letter through Admiral Sims or any one connected with him.

Senator Pittman was unable to fix even a shadow of responsibility upon Admiral Sims and finally left the subject.

V

The next line of questioning was devoted to an effort to make it appear that Admiral Sims had been so pro-British as to be disloyal; that he had opposed the formation of an American Army and urged the brigading of American troops with the Allied troops; and finally that he had belittled the war effort, both of the American Army and of the Navy, even to the point of stating that the armistice had to be accepted because of the breakdown of the communications of the American Army in the Argonne.

Senator Pittman read a paragraph from Admiral Sims' letter of July 16, 1917, urging co-operation with the Allies and the necessity of unity of command. Then he quoted a passage from a letter report of November 15, 1917, in which Admiral Sims, in emphasizing the vital necessity of obtaining

more shipping, said, " Our military participation must be viewed with great anxiety until the rate of production of new tonnage commences to exceed the losses. It has even been suggested that in view of the present situation a good proportion of our National Army could perhaps be more effectively utilized . . . as labour in American shipyards."

Then, in the effort to make his point, Senator Pittman read part of a personal letter of Admiral Sims to Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, R. N., the commander of the forces based on the Irish coast, in which Admiral Sims referred to the discussions then going on " about the best way to use the man power of America on the Western Front," and suggested that it might be decided to transport a large part of the American forces " to the western ports of the British Isles in order that they may be passed through the British camps to the Western Front."

Senator Pittman tried to create the impression that these statements in a personal letter indicated that " you (Admiral Sims) were in favour of putting our soldiers to work in the navy yards as labourers, and that on January 24th (1918) you were in favour of brigading our soldiers with other troops."

Admiral Sims made his own position quite clear when he said in reply:

" The tonnage question was the very basis of the whole business, and if that was not solved the war could not possibly be won with the assistance of the American Army. Therefore it was necessary, not to take all the men who enlisted for the Army and put them in the shipyards . . . but, in the case of men who were shipwrights . . . it was so essential at that time that we have ships . . . that these men, instead of going into the Army, should have been employed in the shipyards. That is only American common sense."

Admiral Sims, in speaking of the question of the use of American troops, said:

"In no case should it be considered that I, a naval officer, attending to my own business, was recommending anything at all. I wanted to know what they were going to do because it might have a marked influence on how my forces should be handled; . . . so that all those things that I discussed with General Bliss — not recommending them, but trying to find out about them — were all done exactly as explained in that letter to Admiral Bayly; and we, as two sailormen were discussing what would be the disposition of the forces that were escorting the troops."

VI

As a trump card, Senator Pittman then read an unsigned memorandum, dated January 14, 1918, that had come from Admiral Sims' personal file. The writer of this memorandum referred to a dinner attended by "Balfour, Cecil, Reading and the host, a very important person," at which was discussed "the most efficient way to employ America's man power on the Western Front, instead of organizing a separate army with its own lines of communication and supply." The memorandum strongly advocated the brigading of American forces with the Allies, and stated that "the reasons opposed to it are purely sentimental — national and state pride and ambition for personal distinction."

Senator Pittman evidently believed the memorandum to have been written by Admiral Sims. He had probably failed to notice that the last sentence in it read: "It is up to you and the men of your cloth" which made it clear that the memorandum must have been sent to Admiral Sims. Admiral Sims asked Pittman who wrote it. Pittman admitted he didn't know save that it was marked "Admiral Sims' personal files." Admiral Sims said: "I did not write that and I do not know who did . . . the probability is that it was a memorandum sent me for my information by Dr. Page, the Ambassador, himself."

Admiral Sims explained how papers from his personal files came to be used when he said:

"I should like to say in this connection with reference to papers that have been used that are marked 'from Admiral Sims' personal file.' Of course, in the position that I occupied on the other side, there was a swarm of such arriving every day. Those letters were handled automatically. The only letters practically that I opened were those that were always recognized by my secretary as being in the handwriting of my wife. All other letters were opened, and naturally a good many of them under general orders. They were letters from all kinds of cranks, and all kinds of inventors. There were opinions and advice given to me by everybody from Spaniards to Sinn Feiners. Those things were usually answered by some member of the staff, who would file the things in my personal files. The great bulk of those things I never saw at all. Now, when the Secretary of the Navy very late in the war, after giving up the idea of an established historical section in Washington to write up the history of this war, ordered me to establish one on the other side, I did so under the very able command of Captain Knox, and I told Captain Knox that he was at liberty not only to take out of the division of files anything which he found had any bearing on the war, quite independent of his opinion as to whether it was correct or not, but that he could also go into my personal files and do the same thing, take anything out of the personal files that he thought might throw any light on the war.

"There are a good many things in there that are exceedingly confidential, but they will be useful to a historian to show the atmosphere. There are letters there written to me by foreign officers of all the Allies in which they have expressed opinions which would be exceedingly embarrassing to those officers to have given out now, but the historian would like to see those things as giving the general atmosphere at the time. I only make this point to show that because a document came out of my personal files, it does not mean that I ever saw the document."

VII

Senator Pittman made another effort to prove Admiral Sims' disloyalty by referring to the statements of three

Democratic Congressmen, based on their recollections of a personal conversation, that Admiral Sims had told them in October, 1918, that the United States had only contributed 3 per cent. of the total number of anti-submarine craft in British waters; and that the Allies would be compelled to accept the armistice because of the breakdown of the communications of the American Army.

Admiral Sims, in his testimony, showed by reference to the number of vessels of the various Allies that the statements he had made with regard to the proportion of vessels in the war zone was a mere statement of fact. He denied absolutely having said that the American Army had broken down and that this breakdown would compel acceptance of the armistice; and quoted letters exchanged with Mr. Martin Egan in 1918 and with General Pershing in 1919 contradicting the assertion that he had not been in sympathy with Pershing. There had obviously been a complete misunderstanding of his meaning and a confusion between what he repeated as gossip and the things which he himself believed.

VIII

Nearly all of one day was spent by Senators Pittman and Trammell in trying to discredit and break down Admiral Sims' estimate of the prolongation of the war and the resulting unnecessary losses attributable to the unpreparedness and delays of the Navy Department. Far from shaking Admiral Sims' testimony, the Democratic Senators merely afforded him opportunity to introduce more confirmatory evidence.

Admiral Sims clearly outlined the basis of his opinion when he said in answer to a question put by Senator Trammell:

" The tonnage situation, of course, is what influenced it, but the trouble is that by our tardiness in entering the war we lost two

and one-half million tons of shipping which we should not have lost. If we had butted in with all of our force in the very beginning, instead of coming in whole-heartedly after six months or a year, we would have saved that tonnage and that situation would not have arisen. I do not know whether you know it or not, but up to the first year of the war we did not have much more than 100 ships of all classes on the other side, and there was not a single ship that was not available or could have been available to be over there in the first 15 days of the war. Now, there is the whole point of all of my statement and all of my criticism. I have not got anything to say about anything else particularly, except that the Navy Department and the Government did not go into the war after they had declared it."

In support of his contention that our military intervention in Europe depended absolutely on the tonnage available, Admiral Sims quoted many passages from General Pershing's final report to the War Department. These made it clearly apparent that the delay in getting the Army to France was due to lack of tonnage. General Pershing, for example, in explaining the slow transport of troops in the first year of the war cabled the War Department in December 1917 that:

" . . . While these numbers fell short of my recommendation of July 6, 1917, which contemplated at least 1,000,000 men by May, 1918, it should be borne in mind that the main factor in the problem was the amount of shipping to become available for military purposes, in which must be included tonnage required to supply the Allies with steel, coal, and food.

" A study of transportation facilities shows sufficient American tonnage to bring over this number of troops, but to do so there must be a reduction in the tonnage allotted to other than Army needs. It is estimated that the shipping needed will have to be rapidly increased up to 2,000,000 tons by May in addition to the amount already allotted. The use of shipping for commercial purposes must be curtailed as much as possible. The Allies are very weak and we must come to their relief this year, 1918. The year after may be too late. It is very doubtful if they can hold

on until 1919, unless we give them a lot of support this year. It is therefore strongly recommended that a complete readjustment of transportation be made and that the needs of the War Department as set forth above be regarded as immediate.

" It is now the middle of December, and the First Corps is still incomplete by over two entire divisions and many corps troops. It cannot be too emphatically declared that we should be prepared to take the field with at least four corps by June 30 (1918). In view of past performances with tonnage heretofore available such a project is impossible of fulfilment, but only by most strenuous attempts to attain such a result will we be in a position to take a proper part in operations in 1918. In view of the fact that as the number of our troops here increases a correspondingly greater amount of tonnage must be provided for their supply, and also in view of the slow rate of shipment with the tonnage now available, it is of the most urgent importance that more tonnage should be obtained at once, as already recommended in my cables and by General Bliss."

IX

In further substantiation of his estimate, Admiral Sims outlined in greater detail than he had done in his direct statement the interrelation between the submarine campaign, the tonnage situation, the transportation of American troops to Europe, the breaking of the German morale and the resultant Allied victory. In his opinion the American intervention brought victory in 1918, instead of in 1919, as had originally been anticipated. Victory was dependent entirely on exerting the strength of America against Germany. This could not be done until the defeat of the submarine permitted a diversion of tonnage for transport of American troops, and ensured the safety of our troop transports. If our force had been asserted in 1917, instead of in 1918, the submarine campaign could have been defeated earlier, American intervention could have been made effective earlier, and the victory would have been won by July, 1918, at the latest, and perhaps even in 1917.

Admiral Sims clearly stated the vital point in this estimate, when, in reply to questions, he said:

"Now I would like to put that in the form of a perfectly simple illustration which can be understood by anybody. It all hinges upon this question, Was our naval effort in the war effective? We all know that it was. Those who oppose this argument have got to assume that it was not. If it was effective, it must have shortened the war. It therefore follows that if there was delay in making it effective, this delay prolonged the war. If three engines will put out a fire in a certain time, four engines will put it out in less time. If there is delay in sending the fourth engine, there will be a corresponding loss. I have shown by the official records that there was delay; delay in preparing for war, even after February 2, 1917, and delay in sending forces and personnel after we declared war. Therefore those responsible for this delay are responsible for the appalling sacrifices of life and treasure that resulted. That, I think, makes the situation entirely clear."

X

Senators Trammell and Pittman were apparently greatly distressed that the Navy Department should have been responsible for great and unnecessary losses. Senator Trammell for example said:

"I want to find out what the facts are, and I want to find out whether the United States has been guilty of practically homicide in 500,000 cases and the waste of this great treasure, and so on, or if the other nations should stand under that indictment; whether they are partially responsible for it."

Senator Pittman similarly felt called upon to defend the Navy, as when he said:

"*Senator Pittman:* . . . But you must realize, Admiral, the conditions that existed here at the beginning of the war. As you said, we practically had no army in the beginning of the war. I do not think that is the Navy's fault. We had no facilities for training at the beginning of the war. I do not think that is

the Navy's fault. The policy decided by the War Department in our country, was to train our soldiers on this side. I do not think that is the Navy's fault. And, as a matter of fact, until the beginning of 1918 it must be evident to you that we had very few soldiers to send anywhere; and then they commenced to come on all at once; and when they came on all at once, the combined navies of the world and the ships of the world got the food there to France, they got the amount of troops to France that Pershing said he would need, and won the war in 1918. I do not think there is any blame attached to the Army; I do not think there is any blame attached to the Navy; and I think that you ought to take back the assertion that the Navy is guilty of the murder of 500,000 people, until you produce some evidence stronger than you have produced.

"*Admiral Sims:* As I said to Senator Trammell, it all depends upon whether you assume that the intervention of the Navy was effective, or whether it was not. If it was effective, it decreased the length of the war, and if it delayed in making it effective, it prolonged the war. When the Navy intervened and the convoy system was put in operation, there was a decrease in loss of shipping. It began in a certain period.

"If it had begun earlier, we would have saved just so much shipping; and if we had had that shipping we could have sent troops faster to France, and we would have done it, there is no doubt about that at all, because General Bliss, in his first visit over there and on coming back again, said they had to get a million men over there as soon as possible, and they did not have the transportation to do it at that time."

"*Senator Pittman:* Well, it was effective; and you do not have to take the position that it was either effective or not effective, at all. It was not as effective as it would have been if Congress had appropriated money for more ships years before; but it was sufficiently effective to get over to France every soldier that we had trained to go to France.

"*Admiral Sims:* Congress did not appropriate as much money as the Navy would have liked to prepare for war, but that is not the point, at all. We are not criticizing Congress for that at all. It is the fact that the anti-submarine forces we had were

on this side, 3,000 miles from where the fighting was going on, and that they were not sent over, actually. We declared war on the 6th of April, and there was not a single force on the other side until the 4th of May. What do you know about that for preparation for war? And I can give you the dates that they arrived — another bunch of ships — and I can show you that after two months there were only 30 destroyers there. I can show you that at the end of a whole year there were approximately 120 vessels of all classes, including supply ships. Not one of those ships was built since the war. There was no reason why they could not have been all sent over immediately upon the declaration of war, and if they had been there, we would have put the submarine campaign out of operation, and decreased the losses. I do not know why they did not send them over there. The good Lord only knows why they did not send them over there, but they did not send them, at all."

XI

Senator Pittman explained, at the end of the cross-examination of Admiral Sims, the purpose he had in mind, as counsel for Mr. Daniels:

"*Admiral Sims:* I do not understand just what the idea is. Do you want to try to imply that I was recommending that there should be no American Army? Now, might I ask this question: Suppose it were true that I did recommend no American Army, what does it have to do with the convoy system in handling of the Navy during the war?

"*Senator Pittman:* I think you are entitled to an answer. I will try to answer it. Admiral, in the first place, there are evidences before this committee that you relied very greatly upon the British Admiralty for all of your opinions.

"*Admiral Sims:* There is no such evidence at all. It was the Allied Naval Council, consisting of the heads of all those navies. Now, how can you conceive an American officer of my experience, not to say record, either being so dumb intellectually or being so defective morally that he would recommend to his Government not what he believed but what the British Govern-

ment wanted? For God's sake, how can you imagine an American doing that?

"*Senator Pittman:* You have asked me a frank question.

"*Admiral Sims:* And I want an answer.

"*Senator Pittman:* I am proceeding to answer. There is evidence here in your own letter that you favoured the British policy or the French policy, certainly not the American policy. of sending raw troops over to the other country without training here. It is in your letter here that you recommend that some of these soldiers be put in the navy yards to work as labourers.

"*Admiral Sims:* Not that they should be worked as labourers, but that an experienced shipwright should not be taken out of the navy yards and put into a camp when we needed ships.

"*Senator Pittman:* There is nothing said in your letter as to that.

"*Admiral Sims:* That is what it says, to take a man of that kind out of the Navy would be asininity, taking him out of the navy yard and making a soldier of him.

"*Senator Pittman:* There are letters here also which indicate to my mind — that is the reason I am going along with this examination — that you wanted the whole American Navy to be turned over to the British; that as far as the protection of the coast was concerned, or any American policy that they had, that you cared nothing for that. There are letters here indicating that your opinions were formulated with Admiral Bayly with regard to these matters.

"*Admiral Sims:* I was not with Admiral Bayly one one-hundredth of the time I was over there. I was in London.

"*Senator Pittman:* Your letters were very confidential. There is evidence here also that in writing to Admiral Bayly you were opposed to the American plan, and were in favour of the British plan with regard to the disposition of our soldiers; that you were in January opposed to a separate army. There is evidence here that you discussed with Pershing a separate army on October 30. There is evidence that on November 9 you still thought . . .

"*Admiral Sims:* There is none of that there.

"*Senator Pittman* (continuing): That Pershing had broken down and that you never expected him to get through.

"*Admiral Sims:* No.

"*Senator Pittman:* That you expected he was broken down. by reason of one line of railroad and not sufficient communication.

"*Admiral Sims:* It was not a railroad at all; a road.

"*Senator Pittman:* That communications with the rear were so incomplete that they had been compelled to slaughter horses for food.

"*Admiral Sims:* All the armies had to do the same thing. What General Maurice said . . .

"*Senator Pittman:* What I think about the proposition is, we are considering whether your advice on these matters was creditable.

"*Admiral Sims:* All right.

"*Senator Pittman:* We are considering as to whether your advice was largely followed.

"*Admiral Sims:* That is the point.

"*Senator Pittman:* And I think that this evidence is material, in that you were advising from the standpoint of foreign countries and not from the policy of your own country.

"*Admiral Sims:* I see. Well, Senator Pittman, that is the veriest possible kind of rot, for this reason, as I pointed out explicitly all through my statement, that this advice that was given to my Government was not only based upon all of the discussions that we had with the people over there, but that it was adopted by our own Government. If it were true that the advice I gave has proved to be wrong in the case of the convoy, and in the case of this, that, and the other, there would be something in what you say. But it proved to be right, and was adopted only after those long delays that cost us so much blood and treasure."

XII

Just before the end of the cross-examination Senator Hale again brought out the fact that Admiral Sims had first recommended the adoption of the convoy system in May,

1917; that it was not put into effect by the Department until four months later. The Allies had not themselves the available vessels to escort convoys. The establishment of the convoy system had therefore been delayed at least three months while the Navy Department was making up its mind whether to co-operate with the Allies or not.

Senator Hale also called attention to the fact that Senator Pittman's questions had been irrelevant to the issues under investigation when he said:

"Admiral Sims, a few minutes ago you began a line of testimony which Senator Pittman attempted to bring out. In your letter of January 7 you criticized the Navy Department for lack of co-operation in carrying on the war. This is and will be of course the main purpose of this investigation. It is unavoidable that some side issues will come in during the course of the hearings. That will not deflect us, however, from our main purpose, which is to find out whether the charges made in your letter are or are not true."

Admiral Sims replied with a final summary of the question at issue:

"I would amend that to say the lack of prompt co-operation. Our Navy Department did co-operate with the Allies eventually. The great difficulty about the whole business is that they did not co-operate promptly. There were all the rest of those delays upon recommendations made as the result of the co-operation with the Allied Naval Council and the acknowledgment of the soundness of that by the Navy and the putting of that into operation. That is the gist of the letter, and it would have been a very, very dangerous situation. in case we had been up against a navy that was not interned — or 'contained,' as they called it,— so far as its battle fleet was concerned, and helpless to do anything against us in our own country, except by submarines which had to come over with half the speed of our forces."

CHAPTER X

PACIFISM AND PROCRASTINATION: EVIDENCE FROM WITHIN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT

(The Testimony of Captains Laning, Palmer and Taussig)

I

IT will be remembered that in concluding his prepared statement before the Senate Committee, Admiral Sims had said:

"In no part of my testimony have I charged the responsibility for any of the failures enumerated against any person, but I have tried to make it clear that the responsibility for these failures rests, in my opinion, upon the Navy Department as an organization rather than upon any individual. If any individual was responsible, wholly or in part, for failures I have pointed out, the fact would necessarily have to be developed by persons who were in a position to know the inner workings of the department during the period in question.

"My official knowledge extends only to the doors of the department and not beyond them. The fact that numerous letters and cable despatches which I have submitted in evidence bear the signature of this or that person, is not to be taken as an indication that I believe the signer personally responsible for the action indicated. They merely indicate that the letter or despatch was official and written with the authority of the Navy Department as an organization.

"To point out violations of well known and generally accepted principles of warfare such as have been shown by my testimony is in itself to suggest the remedy, which is obviously to avoid such violations in the future. It not having been shown up to

this stage of the investigation whether these violations of principle were due to faulty organization of the Navy Department or to faults of personnel I am not, at present, able to submit well-founded recommendations looking to the adoption of measures to insure us against similar violations in the future."

When the Sub-Committee had been instructed in January to investigate the matters dealt with in Admiral Sims' letter of January 7th, 1920, Chairman Hale had announced his intention of calling as witnesses, officers who had served in responsible positions abroad and in the Navy Department before and during the war.

When Admiral Sims completed his testimony, his points had been so thoroughly established by documentary evidence that it was deemed unnecessary to call any further witnesses to substantiate the statements of Admiral Sims' letter, especially as Admiral Sims, in preparing his statement, had had the assistance of the officers who had served in the most important positions on his staff abroad.

The Committee therefore decided to call witnesses who might be able to throw light on the causes of the unpreparedness of the Navy for war, and on the confusion, hesitation and lack of action of the Navy Department after war was declared. Of the witnesses called by the committee, all agreed that conditions in the Navy were as Admiral Sims had described them. In their review of the activities of the Departmen and of Mr. Daniels, from 1913 to 1917, much light was also thrown on the causes of, and the responsibility for, these conditions.

The witnesses called by the Committee, on its own initiative were, in the order of their appearance, Captain Harris Laning, Captain L. C. Palmer, Captain J. K. Taussig, Rear Admiral C. P. Plunkett, Rear Admiral W. L. Grant, Rear Admiral H. T. Mayo, Rear Admiral B. A. Fiske (retired), and Rear Admiral W. F. Fullam (retired).

II

Captain Laning had been, from October, 1916, to July, 1917, assistant for Material in the Office of Naval Operations. In July, 1917, he was transferred to the Bureau of Navigation and placed in charge of the Officer Personnel Division. On September 21, 1918, he became Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and was acting Chief of Bureau from November 1, 1918, to January, 1919.

He had had, therefore, a unique opportunity to acquire an intimate personal knowledge, both of the material condition of the Navy at the time we entered the war, and of the personnel situation during the war. His position had brought him into intimate contact with Mr. Daniels. He said, in fact, that " not many days passed when I was not in personal conference with the Secretary on important subjects or placed before him matters and papers requiring his action or signature. . . . Officially I came to know the Department and its ways very intimately, and . . . I feel I had a more than usual opportunity to gauge the Department and its methods. My statements are therefore not casually made, but are based on my personal knowledge both of officials and of affairs."

Captain Laning, in beginning his statement, made the following summary of the testimony he was in a position to offer:

" From my knowledge of the Navy and from information gained through personal contact with the Navy Department, I am convinced that since the starting of the World War the Department has not administered the Navy as it should have, and as a result the Navy was not properly ready for war in the early days as efficiently as it could and should have been.

" It has taken many things to bring about my convictions, among which I cite the following particulars: —

" FIRST. That in the years immediately preceding our entry

into the war, the Navy Department did not take an attitude on legislation and policies, that would enable the fleet to be made properly ready for war, and that the fleet was not properly ready when war was declared.

"SECOND. That even when war was imminent, when it was apparent that war could not be avoided, the Department, even then, did not do those things that ought to have been done to make the Navy ready to carry on the war in its full strength and along the right lines.

"THIRD. That at about the time war was declared, although a carefully drawn up plan, outlining what direction the Navy's first efforts should take, was submitted by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations for the Department's approval, the plan was not approved and as a result, at the very time a plan was most needed, the Navy did not have any general plan that was based on the peculiar conditions imposed by an enemy whose naval effort was restricted almost entirely to the use of submarines.

"FOURTH. That not having a definite plan to work on, the various parts of the Navy Department could make no co-ordinated effort to carry on the war, but, on the contrary, each part was obliged to do what that part thought might be best, with the result that not only was the effectiveness of the naval effort greatly reduced in the early stages of the war, but also the cost of the war was probably considerably and unnecessarily added to.

"FIFTH. That during the war it was always difficult and frequently impossible to obtain the Department's approval of essential plans and policies, that this made it necessary for subordinate officers to go far beyond their authority to get things done, and that as a result the difficulties of carrying on the war were increased while the effectiveness was decreased."

III

Captain Laning testified that the Navy Department, during Mr. Daniels' administration, failed to keep the vessels of the Navy in a fit condition for war; that not enough men were provided for the ships; that no plans existed to guide

the Navy when war came; and that the fault lay with the Secretary himself.

The Secretary had advocated and obtained a large building program, but his attitude

"made it impossible to have the Navy ready for war either in regard to personnel or matériel. . . . The remarkable feature of the Department's attitude was its apparent inability to realize the necessity for legislation that would provide adequate personnel to man the ships or that would provide for adequate money to keep the completed ships fully ready for war. . . . The Secretary . . . bases our Navy's strength on the total number of ships . . . without taking into consideration their actual material condition for war, or their being manned for war. . . . To be of service a ship must be in a material condition to fight, and it must have a crew not only sufficient to fight it but trained to fight it."

From 1914 to 1916, funds were lacking to keep the ships in fighting trim. Even the best manned ship was woefully shorthanded and many vessels were laid up and so made useless for war purposes, by the lack of officers and men. Captain Laning said.

"I personally know these things to be facts and the Department itself did not make sufficient effort to have them remedied, and they were not remedied. On the contrary such glowing accounts of the Navy, and its splendid condition and efficiency were given out that few, if any, outside the Navy realized the true condition. The Secretary's reports, his hearings before Congress, and his statements to the press at that time were to the effect that the Navy was entirely ready for war."

From 1914 to 1917, said Laning, Congress showed every willingness to make the Navy ready for war, and to authorize anything needed. The greatest need of all was for more men. Even then "the needs . . . were not truly presented to Congress. . . . The service was astounded to learn that the Department had recorded itself against any further in-

crease of personnel, and this at a time when only about half our ships were manned with even peace complements!"

IV

Captain Laning went on to describe at length the shortage of men in the Navy and the resulting unpreparedness for war in 1917. He quoted from his testimony before the House Naval Committee in December, 1918 (over a year before Admiral Sims' letter was written) when as Acting Chief of the Bureau of Navigation he had said:

"At that time . . . (April, 1917) of our armoured cruisers . . . all but two were manned with partial crews so small the ships couldn't run. At League Island and other navy yards, we had a number of battleships laid up in reserve because we did not have enough people to operate them. We had about 25 destroyers half manned and a number of other ships that ought to have been in operation all the time and weren't even partly manned because we didn't have the officers and men even to half man them. . . . We began to enlist men by the tens of thousands . . . and these had to be trained. . . . We were in the predicament of not having personnel to man our ships and also of not having it even to train recruits to man them. A more difficult and serious situation at the beginning of a great war can hardly be imagined.

"*Mr. Oliver.* When was that?

"*Captain Laning.* That was in 1917 at the beginning of the war with Germany. . . . Everywhere there was a cry for officers and men that we did not have . . . of all the vast Navy of the United States the only ships we had anywhere near ready were about half our battleships and destroyers and even they were not up to battle strength in personnel."

V

In October, 1918, the Bureau of Navigation submitted to the Secretary of the Navy a statement for incorporation in

his annual report with regard to the personnel situation in the Navy during the war. Captain Laning included in his testimony a copy of this official report of the Bureau, which began with the following statement:

"At the time the United States entered the war, the personnel of the Navy, while of a high standard, was entirely inadequate to meet the needs of war as it is waged today. Neither of enlisted men nor of officers were there enough to man the ships of the Navy that were then ready. It was possible to man and put into war operations those ships for which there were crews, but those ships were only a part of our available fighting force. The newer battleships and destroyers were manned and ready when war was declared, but the older ships including battleships, armoured cruisers, destroyers, etc., had only half crews and a few were not even in commission. . . . Fortunately for us the enemy was not at our doors. The allied fleets that for nearly three years held the enemy sea forces in check were still sufficient to hold them enough longer to permit us to get our personnel ready. In this we were very fortunate, but we should not again let our navy personnel be so reduced that we cannot, on the declaration of war, put our full fighting forces into operation."

The Secretary of the Navy suppressed this report and in his own annual report for 1918 gave a surprisingly different account of the condition of the Navy in 1917. Having this report of the Bureau of Navigation before him, he still had the audacity to write, on December 1, 1918, that on April 6, 1917, the "Navy from stem to stern had been made ready to the fullest extent possible for any eventuality."

VI

In spite of the fact that the Navy Department had had "fairly accurate information of Germany's submarine building program and of her intention to carry on unrestricted attacks on merchant shipping, . . . the Department failed to take steps to get the fleet ready for war." The Atlantic

Fleet was not sent to the yards for essential repairs, even after the breach of diplomatic relations, but was kept in Cuban waters at routine exercises. The result was clearly shown by Admiral Mayo in a report submitted at the time we entered the war of the repairs needed to get the ships ready for war service. Captain Laning testified that "it was found that it would take a period of over 100 days to get all battleships, even of the active fleet, materially ready for war." These were, moreover, the only vessels of the Navy that were even approximately prepared! Yet, as Captain Laning said, "they were not ready at that time (April, 1917) either as to material or personnel."

VII

Captain Laning gave convincing evidence not only of the unpreparedness of the Navy for war, but also of the lack of plans or organization for meeting the emergencies created by war. As late as February 18, 1917, he, as the chief assistant in the material branch of Operations, had not heard of any plans. War then seemed close at hand, and Captain Laning felt that something should be done. He, therefore, submitted a memorandum calling attention to the lack of any plans and urging that a plan be prepared.

In this memorandum he had said:

"There seems to be no general plan for handling the immediate menace. Without any other plan in mind than that developed to meet a situation in no way similar to the present situation, the Navy Department as a whole is proceeding with its task as if there was nothing new in the situation. . . . Not knowing what general plan must be followed in a situation like the present, practically the whole Department is at a standstill in preparing for it. . . . The country believes we are at least ready to put a plan of some sort in operation and I feel that we are not doing our duty if we fail to do so."

Captains V. O. Chase, W. V. Pratt and F. H. Schofield of the Office of Operations finally drew up, in March, 1917, the general outlines of a plan to meet the immediate situation. This provided specifically for the use of the emergency fund voted by Congress on March 3, 1917. It received the approval of Admiral Benson, but was never put into effect, as the Secretary declined to approve it, for the reason that he insisted on deciding himself on all expenditures. Neither this nor any other administrative plan was put into effect even after war began.

The result, as Captain Laning described it, was that

"no one knew what to do. The Bureau of Ordnance, not having any definite plan to provide guns and ammunition for, was forced to order them for all kinds of projects, whether or not such might be feasible in the war. . . . The Bureau of Supplies and Accounts had no information on which to base their purchase of supplies and was forced to buy, not what actually would be needed, but what they guessed they might possibly be called on for. . . .

"A month or so after the armistice was signed Admiral McGowan, Chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, said to me: 'Do you remember the plan you tried to put through at the outbreak of war, that provided for handling the emergency fund, and which the Secretary wouldn't approve. God, man, if he only had done it. The way things have gone . . . we have over expended the emergency fund by about $165,000,000!'

"The Bureau of Navigation had no idea of what they should do as to providing personnel. Every bureau and every office was in a similar predicament.

". . . Not having a definite general plan to work on, the operating part of the Department was in quite as much of a quandary as the material part. Instead of concentrating on a broad and clearly defined plan, the Navy began the war with merely a series of efforts exerted in several directions, and only co-ordinated as each received consideration in one office, that of the Chief of Naval Operations."

VIII

To this lack of plans and the resulting confusion after war began, Captain Laning attributed the delays and hesitations of the early months of the war. Under the circumstances it was impossible for Admiral Benson to "send to Admiral Sims the anti-submarine craft that were wanted so badly on the other side" or "to tell Admiral Sims what forces were ultimately to be sent to the war zone. . . . Instead of having his original plan approved that he might put the machinery of our great Navy to work to carry it out . . . he was compelled to sink himself in details and get approval of first one and then another part of his plans. . . . Under the guidance of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy's efforts did ultimately follow a correct and sound general plan." Even this, however, was never laid down on paper nor was it ever formally approved.

Nor had Captain Laning any doubt of the cause of the confusion and delay in our war efforts, resulting from unpreparedness and lack of suitable war plans. The Secretary of the Navy was himself responsible, for, as Captain Laning testified:

"It was the personal characteristics of the Secretary of the Navy that often made it impossible to get approval of the really important policies. I found this myself, and many others found it. . . .

"Whenever a plan or a policy was presented to the Secretary he almost invariably delayed action on it. The personal interest taken by him in all matters connected with the Department absorbed so much of his time that he never had much left to give to us on the more important affairs. Therefore when we would present something important, even though it might be urgent, we could secure only a few minutes to discuss it. We would generally be directed to leave the paper with him for consideration. Now it is remarkable but true that papers left for 'consideration' were for the most part not heard of again until the officer

who presented the paper hunted it out. Frequently when it was followed up the paper could not be found. If it was found, there would usually be some reason for not approving it or of further delaying action. We always considered it much easier to get up a sound plan or policy than it was to get permission or authority to carry it out. It generally took longer to get approval, when we succeeded in getting it at all, than it did to formulate the plan or policy. This condition finally became so bad that officers used every means possible to put their plans and policies through without obtaining the required authority.

" My own difficulties in this respect were probably greater than those of officers who had only to get approval of plans or policies, for not only did I have papers of that kind to present but also, being in charge of the officer personnel division, I had to prepare the vast number of orders to officers, commissions, etc., that the Secretary by law or by his orders had to sign."

IX

The officers in the Department, finding that they could not get the approval of the Secretary for measures of vital necessity, assumed responsibility and did what was necessary, even in some cases contrary to the express orders of Mr. Daniels. A number of instances, cited by Captain Laning, and fully corroborated later by Captain Palmer and other officers, were the following:

" As you no doubt know, the Bureau of Navigation is responsible for the personnel of the Navy. The mission of the Bureau is to obtain, train and distribute personnel. Early in the war the Bureau realized that it could rarely obtain approval of its plans for performing its mission in the war and from that time on the Bureau was forced to assume much more authority in those matters than actually belonged to it. In spite of failure to get plans for obtaining men approved and even in spite of repeated orders not to take men into the reserves, Admiral Palmer directed that they be taken in and we took them in. Captain Palmer himself can give you further information on this point. When it

came to plans for training men, approval was equally hard to get. Captain Palmer and Captain E. L. Bennett can give you some interesting details of their difficulties in that line and of how they frequently went ahead and did things without having authority to do them. As for the distribution of personnel, the Secretary of course rarely knew about the distribution except in the case of officers. But in the case of officers I met a most remarkable attitude in regard to sending officers not attached to ships abroad for duty in the war area. I made it one of the rules of the office that when Admiral Sims asked for officers he was to get them but I always had lots of trouble getting such orders signed. As a matter of fact, not once, but several times, during the war the Secretary told me, and told the Chief of Bureau too, *that he didn't want any more officers sent abroad.* Of course they had to go and we sent them by the simple process of assuming an authority we did not have and issuing the orders and passports ourselves."

Captain Laning submitted documents proving long delays after we entered the war in placing contracts for shells and torpedoes; in repairing the vessels of the Navy; in taking over the German ships for use as troop transports and in deciding on the program of building destroyers.

These cases all demonstrated the tremendous efforts made by the officers in the Department to get on with the war, and showed, in Captain Laning's words, "what lengths we were put to, to get approval of vitally important matters and how such matters were delayed through the difficulties in getting approval. That these difficulties made the Navy's task much harder is certain; what the resulting delays cost in lives and treasure no one can even guess.

"I was and still am amazed that the Navy was able to accomplish the remarkable work it did, but it is certain that what it did accomplish could have been accomplished much more quickly and much more efficiently . . . if we could have had a plan from the very start."

X

Much of Captain Laning's testimony had referred to the personnel situation before and during the war. Every statement he had made with regard to the inadequate number of officers and men, the Secretary's responsibility for this condition, and the way in which the naval officers achieved results by ignoring the Secretary was fully confirmed by the next witness called, Captain Leigh C. Palmer, who was Chief of the Bureau of Navigation from August, 1916, to November, 1918.

It was also corroborated by Captain J. K. Taussig, who had been in the Enlisted Personnel Division from April, 1912, to May, 1915, and again from September, 1918, to May, 1919, and who had commanded the first division of destroyers that arrived at Queenstown on May 4, 1917.

Every naval officer who testified, in fact, fully admitted that conditions were as described by Captains Laning, Palmer and Taussig. Officers called at the request of Mr. Daniels tried to explain and excuse the facts. They did not question them. Only Mr. Daniels did that.

Captain Palmer testified that when he made his first review of the personnel situation, in October, 1916, he found that "we were approximately 950 regular officers short and 1,600 to 1,700 reserve officers short, and in the case of enlisted men 28,000 regulars and 23,000 reserves short . . . of the number required to man the vessels which the Chief of Naval Operations said were necessary to be manned for mobilization; and we had this shortage after we made use of the 9,000 militia. . . . This was an actual shortage and did not include a percentage for sickness and transfers, etc. . . . nor any working surplus as a reserve." This, too, was a shortage of the number required for a *peace* and not a *war* basis.

The Bureau in 1916 had appealed to Congress for 40,000 more men. The Secretary had only asked 10,000 additional,

and Congress finally authorized an increase of 23,000 in August, 1916. Until war began, Captain Palmer had been able to do very little, therefore, to remedy the shortage in men. The naval reserve, authorized in 1916, had been put under the direction of the Bureau of Navigation, by a general order signed by Admiral Benson one day when he was acting Secretary, while both Mr. Daniels and the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Roosevelt, were away from Washington. This gave Palmer the power to expand the reserve force indefinitely without further reference to the Secretary. He enrolled as many men as possible in the reserve and continued to do so in spite of repeated orders from Mr. Daniels, throughout 1917, to stop enrollments.

XI

In discussing the Navy's war efforts Captain Palmer said:

"The shortage of regular personnel at the declaration of war was, of course, the initial handicap of the Navy's activities, because the Navy had to begin at once to send officers and men afloat."

Once war began and the Bureau was allowed a free hand, it went ahead with the work of recruiting and training men. The Navy in a year and a half was expanded ten fold. A wonderful work was done. But this work was accomplished by naval officers, acting on their own initiative.

The Secretary hindered this work in many ways. In spite of the fact that few regular officers of the Navy were available for recruiting duty, the Secretary refused to allow retired officers to be so employed.

He opposed Palmer's efforts to increase the number of officers, and make up part of the shortage of over 3,000 from the number that would be needed in war, by increasing the number of midshipmen at Annapolis and by reducing the

course temporarily from four years to three. Palmer persuaded Congress to authorize this against the Secretary's opposition.

The Secretary also repeatedly ordered enrollments stopped and declined to authorize the establishment of schools and the building of training camps on a scale commensurate with the needs of the Navy. Captain Palmer testified that these things had to be done, and that "I decided that it was up to me to prepare . . . and to take the responsibility for going ahead and working up this organization . . . so that I would be prepared for anything." . . .

"*The Chairman:* And you took matters in your own hands and went ahead?

"*Captain Palmer:* Yes, I did. I did not, however, until after I had exhausted every means to get the thing done. *I think the whole thing was due to procrastination.*

"*The Chairman: On the part of the Secretary?*

"*Captain Palmer: Yes, sir.*

"*The Chairman:* Did the Secretary give you any reasons for delaying the carrying out of the plan?

"*Captain Palmer:* Well, no reasons, of course that appealed to me, or appealed to our people that were charged with personnel; but he would say 'We have too many men now. We don't want any more.'

"*The Chairman:* This was within two or three months immediately preceding the war?

"*Captain Palmer:* And after the war began. . . . That was due to a lack of appreciation of what was required in order to get the men together. . . . I knew that if I did not have them on time I would not be doing what I was ordered to do. . . . On the one hand I was pushed by Operations to get them, and on the other hand I could not make any headway with the Department (i. e. Secretary Daniels) in getting the necessary authority. . . . For instance take the subject of housing the men. . . . I simply got the statement, after many trials and after presenting the thing in the most forcible manner: 'We have no appropriation.' . . . But still Operations wanted me to do these things. . . . I

decided it was best to go ahead and take the steps necessary . . . even if we did not have the appropriations or the authority."

Captain Palmer knew from his experience with Congress that they would refuse, during the war, no reasonable request. Consequently, he thought that "there was no reason for a delay of months, and the best thing would be to go ahead with it. . . . So I arranged, for instance, with the Captains of the Training Stations, particularly with the Great Lakes Training Station . . . to go ahead with the work without having full authority of Congress . . . when the Department would not take the responsibility, I went ahead, with the full assistance of the Commandants at the stations."

Congress justified Captain Palmer's action by appropriating money for work already completed in many cases; and completed, too, without Mr. Daniels ever knowing about it. He was unaware that the Great Lakes station was being enlarged, to care for nearly 50,000 men, until the expansion was practically completed and he visited Chicago on a speaking tour. Then he was pleased with the achievement and made a speech about the foresightedness of his administration in preparing so wisely for the emergency!

XII

Captain Palmer gave many instances of the difficulties imposed upon the Bureau of Navigation by the lack of any general war plans.

"We had no plans, we had only a mobilization sheet . . . stating the vessels which would be required for mobilization. . . . We had no definite plan on which to base future assignments. I could not go on the plan that we were going to go into battleship warfare or submarine warfare or anything of the kind. I could not look far enough ahead and specialize on those people both as regards numbers and duties."

On the contrary, the Bureau of Navigation would be told to provide for crews for certain ships within ten days or a month. Each project was handled separately. There was no general co-ordination, such as adequate war plans would have provided.

On one occasion in March, 1917, said Captain Palmer:

"I understood that a plan was being prepared in Operations and I went up and asked for it several times . . . because it was very valuable for me to have such a plan, so that I could place the personnel in a logical way and endeavor to train them; but I was told there was a plan in progress; that they were getting up one at that time. That was just before the war. I heard again that it was being drawn up, during the first months of the war. But I did not get that plan. I do not know whether it was actually gotten out or not. . . .

"When I found that there was not any plan such as I expected them to have, and we could not get a definite order of the kind (telling us what to do), I went ahead and made my own plan. To be sure, that is not a very good way to do, because I did not have the information which should have been had before you try to work out any plan. . . ."

In default of any general departmental war plan, therefore, the Bureau of Navigation had to guess what might be required of it, and do its best to meet any demands that might be made, without receiving in advance any indication at all as to what these demands might be.

XIII

Captain Palmer, like every other officer, felt that "the results accomplished by the Navy were perfectly wonderful during the war. I would say that they were accomplished in spite of the obstacle of not having people to start with, and having a short time to train. . . ."

In concluding his testimony Captain Palmer said he did not know how long the delays of the Navy Department pro-

longed the war. He was quite clear, however, as to the causes of the delays, as the following passage indicates:

"I should say that all those delays we had were simply due to postponement — *well I guess 'procrastination' would be the word* — and when I found things could not be done, after taking every step I could, I went ahead and provided a personnel. so we did not really have many delays, as far as the personnel was concerned, in winning the war. I would not say that we had a week's delay or a month's delay as far as the Bureau of Navigation was concerned. But I do not know about the general plan."

XIV

Captain Taussig, in his testimony, described in detail the reasons for the personnel shortage in 1917. The Navy had been short of men from the beginning of the Daniels administration. This had been recognized in 1914, but nothing was done by the Navy Department to remedy the situation. Captain Taussig said:

"Unless measures had been taken as early as 1914 to place our personnel on a proper and adequate basis, it could not possibly have been done by the time this country declared war, two and a half years later.

"From 1914 on the policy of the Department in regard to personnel — and especially the enlisted force — was such that the Navy was far from being ready for war when we became a belligerent.

"In 1914, while on duty in the Bureau of Navigation, it was evident, and clearly recognized by the officer in charge of enlisted personnel and myself, his assistant, that the enlisted personnel was entirely inadequate for the proper manning of our already completed ships on a peace basis and dangerously deficient should we be suddenly thrown into war.

"These facts were repeatedly brought to the attention of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (then Rear Admiral Victor Blue) . . . and a memorandum was prepared showing that to

man the ships and stations, even in accordance with the inadequate peace complements, the authorized strength of the Navy was more than 18,000 men short of what was needed. . . . As new construction was being completed for which additional personnel was needed, the unsatisfactory conditions in regard to personnel were continually growing worse. . . . These unsatisfactory conditions . . . continued to exist up to the time that the United States entered the war."

XV

The evidence submitted by Captain Taussig proved that Secretary Daniels, with the assistance of his friend from North Carolina, Rear Admiral Blue, had not only prevented the Navy from having the men it needed, but had declared to Congress that no such need existed. The following incident was cited:

"The General Board of the Navy, in its 1914 annual report to the Secretary of the Navy, recognized that the unsatisfactory personnel situation greatly impaired the efficiency of the Fleet, and made recommendation to the Department that an additional 19,600 enlisted men be immediately requested The Secretary of the Navy did not accept the report of the Board with this recommendation, but returned it to the Board with the request that all mention of a numerical increase be eliminated. This the Board did, in order that the other important features of the report be not lost to the public. . . ."

The Secretary in his annual report for 1914 stated:

"By wisely utilizing the present personnel all ships of the class named (in the General Board Report) can be maintained in full commission without addition to the present enlistment and therefore no legislation is needed to carry out their recommendations. This is clearly shown in the report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. . . ."

Captain Taussig commented very forcibly on this statement of the Secretary;

"The figures submitted by the Chief of the Bureau . . . did not allow for adequate complements for the ships mentioned in the General Board's report and did not provide for nucleus crews for the other 225 ships of the Navy required manned by the General Board. As the officer in the Bureau of Navigation who actually worked out the details of the enlisted personnel to ships and stations. . . . I know that the personnel as it existed at that time could not be utilized so as to maintain ships as recommended by the General Board.

"The General Board had found that in order to carry out its recommendations an immediate increase of 19,600 men of the active Navy was needed.

"We in the Enlisted Personnel Division who were charged with the administration of the personnel found that the immediate increase should be approximately 19,000 men.

"The Secretary requested no additions for the active enlisted force. Consequently the unsatisfactory personnel situation continued."

XVI

In the course of his testimony, Captain Taussig stated that "while in the Bureau of Navigation, and immediately after leaving the Bureau in 1915, I made an exhaustive study of the whole navy personnel situation. The official records were at my disposal and I had an experience of three years in the administration of the enlisted personnel force of the entire Navy. This study resulted in my writing in 1915 a paper on the subject of naval personnel."

This paper was submitted to the Naval Institute, was awarded "first honourable mention" in the essay contest for 1915, and was accepted for publication. "In accordance with Navy Regulations," said Captain Taussig, "the Department's authority for publication was requested. The Navy Department refused authority for its publication, without giving reasons, and as a result it has never been printed."

The chairman asked Captain Taussig to submit a copy to

the Committee, and it was accordingly printed in the record of the Hearings. The main points of interest, in regard to the personnel situation of the Navy in 1915, as summarized by Captain Taussig are:

"1. The allowed complements of ships in commission were 'peace' complements and were from 15 to 30 per cent. less than would be required for war.

"2. In spite of the inadequacy of the peace complements the ships did not even have these allowed peace numbers on board, — the battleships in full commission having an average of 100 vacancies per ship in the enlisted force.

"3. There were 42 ships (on the General Board's list) with only 3/10 of their peace complements on board, 16 ships with only 1/10 of their peace complements on board, 38 ships out of commission with no naval personnel on board. No personnel was available to fill these up.

"4. There were in the Navy in 1915, a total of 1920 commissioned line officers and 53,000 enlisted men.

"5. To put what material we had (plus 75 auxiliaries to be immediately purchased) in operation for war there would be immediately required a total of 4,440 line officers and 106,900 enlisted men, which was 2,520 line officers and 53,900 men more than we had in actual service."

XVII

Captain Taussig gave extracts from many official reports sent the Department from 1915 to 1917, inviting attention to the distressing results of the shortage of men. The battleship force, which was better supplied than any other part of the Navy, was 5,000 men short in 1915, as was officially reported by the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral F. F. Fletcher. The shortage continued up to the time we entered war, as a result of the Secretary's incorrect report in 1914, and his refusal to request the increases needed.

The entire Navy, for several years prior to the entrance

of this country into the war and up to the time of actual hostilities, was not as efficient as it should have been, because of this lack of necessary personnel.

Captain Taussig, who had commanded destroyers in the war zone, testified that

"while the destroyers could operate against submarines with some degree of success, I am safe in saying that not a single one of our destroyers in the war zone, shortly after the turnover in personnel (to provide crews for new destroyers) commenced, was in really satisfactory or efficient condition for taking part in a fleet action or engaging enemy destroyers. It would have taken at least four months period of preparation with stable crews, away from the war zone before they could have been expected to operate successfully.

". . . This procedure of depleting the destroyers in the war zone was absolutely necessary under the existing conditions, in order that the new destroyers could operate. . . . But such procedure should not have been necessary, nor would it have been necessary had our personnel been adequate at the beginning of the war."

XVIII

In concluding his testimony, Captain Taussig summarized the evidence he had introduced. "It is evident," he said, "that the following facts have been established:

"1. That when the World War started in 1914 the personnel of the United States Navy was entirely inadequate for peace purposes and deplorably deficient should this country be thrown into the war, an event which was apt to occur at any time.

"2. That this deplorable and unsatisfactory condition of the personnel was brought to the department's attention by the General Board of the Navy, by the commander in chief of the Atlantic Fleet, by the officers of the Enlisted Personnel Division of the Bureau of Navigation, and by many other officers of high rank.

"3. That these same officers made repeated and emphatic recommendations to the department that immediate steps be taken to remedy these unsatisfactory conditions, showing conclusively in their reports and recommendations that the efficiency of the entire Navy was adversely affected by the great shortage of personnel.

"4. That the department not only ignored these recommendations but took steps to prevent the reports as to the unsatisfactory personnel conditions from being made public, and the Secretary of the Navy in his annual report to the President in the fall of 1914, stated that the numerical strength of the enlisted personnel was adequate, and in his report of 1915 that only an additional 10,000 men were needed, while the General Board in its 1914 report had stated that 19,600 men were immediately needed.

"5. That the department did not take adequate steps to provide personnel absolutely necessary for proper conduct of the Navy on even a peace basis, with a result that when this country entered the war in 1917 the ships of the fleet were not as efficient as they should have been and for a large number of ships there was no trained personnel at all.

"6. The policy of the department in regard to personnel was one of unpreparedness rather than of preparedness. Such steps as were finally taken were too late to place the personnel on a proper basis by the time this country became involved in the war a few months later.

"7. That as a result of this department policy of unpreparedness the larger part of the ships of the Navy operated throughout the war with inadequately trained personnel, and in consequence they were not as efficient as they should have been.

"8. That the efficiency of the destroyers in the war zone was decreased by the necessity caused by our unprepared personnel of sending many of their most efficient men to the United States to form nucleus crews for the new destroyers.

"9. That unless these nucleus crews had been taken from those destroyers actually operating in the face of the enemy the department would not have been able to provide sufficient

trained personnel for the new destroyers to permit their operating.

"10. That the new destroyers commissioned during the war were not efficient for fighting purposes on account of the large proportion of untrained personnel on each one."

CHAPTER XI

UNPREPAREDNESS FOR WAR; EVIDENCE FROM THE FLEET

(The Testimony of Rear-Admirals Plunkett, Grant and Mayo)

I

THE testimony of Captains Laning, Palmer and Taussig proved that the departmental policy prior to 1917 had been one "of unpreparedness rather than preparedness" so far as the personnel of the Navy was concerned. Captain Laning's testimony had shown a similar unpreparedness in the material condition of the ships, in lack of plans and in the indecision and "procrastination" of the Department's heads. Further corroborative evidence of the existence of a chaotic state of unpreparedness from 1914 to 1917 was provided by the testimony of Admirals Plunkett, Grant and Mayo, who were the next witnesses to be examined.

II

Rear Admiral C. P. Plunkett had been Inspector of Target Practice in the Navy Department from December, 1915, to July, 1918, when he went abroad to command the Navy's 14-inch railway batteries on the Western Front.

Admiral Plunkett's testimony was characteristic of the man in its honest bluntness and vivid effectiveness. No one could have characterized Mr. Daniels' procrastination and unwillingness to pay heed to the Navy's readiness for war more strikingly. He said, for example:

"When I took over the duties of gunnery training in the Navy Department I went to Mr. Daniels and stated in the most positive manner that there could be no gunnery without people, and we did not have the people. To make a long story short, I argued with him first and last, for two years, without ever making any impression upon him whatever. . . . I want to say right now that in all my dealings with Mr. Daniels I have never been treated with greater courtesy by any one, but he is the only man I ever had anything to do with that I practically left little or no impression upon. . . ."

The gunnery exercises in the fleet brought home to all officers the fact

"that we were terribly undermanned, and it was those reports that Captain Taussig speaks of here, which flowed over my desk in volumes, which kept me pegging away at the Secretary of the Navy all the time asking for more men. . . .

"It may seem odd that as I was a subordinate officer I took those memoranda to the Secretary of the Navy; but I assure you that I took them there because the Chief of Naval Operations had exhausted all the talk he had in his system.

"*The Chairman:* Who was the Chief of Naval Operations?

"*Admiral Plunkett:* Admiral Benson. He said 'If you can get them, go and get them. I cannot get them.'"

III

Admiral Plunkett testified that as a result of Admiral Mayo's insistence on gunnery improvements and as a result of even slight increases in the crews, the gunnery of the Atlantic Fleet, in March, 1917, was "at the highest state of efficiency that it has been in the history of the American Navy." He went on to say, however, that "that applied only to the ships that were in commission with the fleet," and that "we were still undermanned."

The shortage of men resulted in the immediate destruction of the gunnery efficiency of the fleet when war began. Such

efficiency depends upon long training of the crews and on permanence of the personnel. The outbreak of war made it necessary to take half the trained men off the battleships and destroyers in order to provide armed guards for merchant vessels and to man the destroyers, cruisers and other vessels that had been practically without crews when war began. The outbreak of war inevitably destroyed, therefore, the efficiency of the only vessels that were even approximately prepared for war in 1917.

Admiral Plunkett was very emphatic on this point. "The trouble began," he said, "just before our entry into the war, and continued right along practically the whole of the year 1917." They had to take off the battleships nearly all the trained officers and men for other vessels. "That was the beginning of the downfall, you might say, of the fleet efficiency; and I have seen nothing on record to indicate that they have ever fully recovered it."

This depletion of the trained personnel very soon destroyed the efficiency of all the battleships, including those that Admiral Rodman took abroad. Concerning these Admiral Plunkett said:

"They were very much depleted of the number of officers they had in the spring of the year . . . and had practically only a nucleus of those officers; and naturally they were not ready for battle when they got over there. . . . With 75 per cent. of green men on a ship, the wildest imagination would not claim that that ship was ready for battle."

IV

The desperate shortage of personnel that occurred when war came occasioned no surprise to Admiral Plunkett or to the officers in the Department. "We had been a long time trying to get more men and to impress upon everybody that a navy without men was no navy, and that a ship

without a proper complement was no ship. We had not had any luck and when war actually did come upon us we were shorthanded, and it was nothing but the natural instinct of the American that saved the day." Even so, our fleet "was not ready for war at the end of the war, because it takes years to train officers and men to conduct the gunnery of a modern battleship." . . .

"Unless you keep them fully ready for war, they are not worth the money you are spending on them, because everything is absent when a ship does not understand that the reason of their existence is their ability to fight and fight effectively; and a ship which is undermanned cannot fight effectively, no matter what the skill of the people may be."

The shortage of personnel was such in 1917 that our unpreparedness was criminal. Admiral Plunkett made this point with picturesque emphasis. All the material may have been ready, but the fleet as a fighting unit was not ready.

"The truth of the matter is that if we had been up against Germany at the outbreak of this war we would be paying the indemnity today instead of their paying it; and all because we did not have a sufficient personnel ship for ship right through the line. As we know their gunnery, although they stood the British on their heads at the Battle of Jutland, we were ready for them if we had had the men. We did not have them. The reason we did not have them is because Mr. Daniels would not let us get them. He would not let us argue with the committees in Congress. would not let us do anything toward getting more men, in spite of the fact that everybody from the top clean through to the bottom knew that we must have men. . . ."

V

Admiral Plunkett brought out with equal force the result of entering the war, as we did, without war plans. Instead of using our forces effectively against the enemy, we were

swayed by indecision and inertia and adopted a purely defensive policy, at least during the first months of the war.

Admiral Plunkett said:

"I think you must realize by this time that we had no plan when we entered the war — no war plan. We had a mobilization plan, that is, a list of ships and the number of men and officers to go on them, but there was no plan for making war — using those ships for war purposes. As soon as we entered the war, I expect the Chief of Naval Operations was flooded with all sorts of suggestions. . . . But all our suggestions were based on a lack of information.

"There was no plan for the offensive action. Whatever plans there were, or whatever plans were first evolved were entirely defensive. . . . In the absence of any plan the most natural thing to do is to take the defensive until you find out 'where you are at' and that was our situation.

". . . The truth of this matter is that when we entered the war we were forced to take the defensive. . . . The first move was the organization of the patrol forces of the Atlantic coast; a purely defensive measure.

". . . The change from a purely defensive attitude to an offensive attitude came about through a realization that the war was over there and not over here."

VI

Rear Admiral A. W. Grant gave much valuable evidence concerning the part of our submarines and reserve battleships in the war. From June, 1915, to August, 1917, he had commanded the submarine force. After August 20, 1917, he commanded Battleship Force One, composed of the older battleships, which were used in the war to train men and occasionally to escort convoys.

In discussing the condition of our submarines, Admiral Grant stated that at the time we entered the war we had not a single submarine fit for war service. In spite of his efforts from 1915 to 1917 "there was very little that could

be done to get the submarines in an efficient condition for war or for any other purpose on account of the unreliability of poorly designed engines."

In 1915, Admiral Grant had invited the attention of the Department to this fact, and had urged the construction of 800-ton submarines of a serviceable type, but "it took more than two years of propaganda to bring Department officials to recognize the importance of having a submarine capable of performing equal duty with the German 800-ton U-boats."

The Congressional committee had been the first to take any steps toward improving the Submarine Force. The members of the General Board had opposed a more efficient type of submarine. The Chief of Operations and the Chief of Bureaus were "aware of the condition of the Submarine Force, but nothing was done by them. The result was, as Admiral Grant testified, that in April, 1917, "we had none suitable for entering the war."

VII

Admiral Grant also confirmed the testimony of previous witnesses concerning the lack of any war plan. When asked about such plans, he said:

"I do not recall ever having received a plan from the Navy Department, looking to the use of the available submarines in the war. I did, however, plan to operate them from bases on this coast."

The first intimation he had received that submarines might be used in the war zone came on July 2, 1917, in the form of an order from the Chief of Naval Operations, directing him to prepare the twelve most suitable submarines for service in European waters. These were to be ready to sail on August 15th.

This order Admiral Grant carried out to the best of his

ability although, as he informed the Department, all the submarines were inefficient. He reported officially, for example that " considering the facts concerning the 12 designated boats: (a) unreliability of engines, (b) their fixed periscopes, (c) five of the 12 do not carry guns, (d) lack of habitability and radius of action; I am of the opinion that, should the expedition arrive safely in European waters, the majority of the vessels would be laid up continually for repairs, as all of them have been (except the E-1) since being placed in commission."

His prophecy was borne out, at least in the case of four K-boats sent to the Azores. These were laid up for repairs the greater part of the time.

VIII

When Admiral Grant assumed command of the 18 battleships of the Reserve Force, on August 20, 1917, he found that they were " sadly in need of urgent repairs." In spite of his representations " none of these vessels were permitted during 1917 and the winter of 1917–1918 to visit a navy yard for a longer period than 10 days." . . . " Obviously nothing was accomplished at the navy yards, beyond the routine docking work."

On December 3, 1917, an order was received directing that " all units of the fleet shall be maintained at all times in such condition that it will be practicable to proceed on distant service at any time after filling up with fuel." Few of Admiral Grant's force were fit for war service. None had an adequately trained crew. Yet from August, 1917, to April, 1918, he was unable to get even the most necessary repairs done, in spite of repeated requests. These repairs would have required from 30 to 50 days for each ship. Their condition was such that Admiral Grant said: " I doubt whether a single one of these vessels could have

remained afloat in August, 1917, had they received a serious underwater body explosion at that time."

In the case of these battleships, as with the submarines, "there was not a single vessel," so Admiral Grant testified, that was ready for war in April, 1917, either as to personnel or as to material. Nor was there a single one of these battleships ready for war in September, 1917.

IX

The Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet from 1917 to 1919 was Admiral H. T. Mayo. He was called to testify before the Senate committee on March 30, 1920, three weeks after the investigation had begun.

Admiral Mayo's testimony was largely devoted to a running narrative in chronological order, of his activities from February 2, 1917, until the armistice. He told the story of the developments day by day, in so far as the Atlantic Fleet was concerned. He included also an account of his missions abroad in 1917 and in 1918, and a report of the naval conference of September, 1917, in London, which he had attended as the representative of the Navy Department.

In some few details, Admiral Mayo took issue with certain of the previous witnesses. In all essentials, however, his testimony was in complete harmony with theirs, especially in regard to the condition of the Navy in 1917; the absence of war plans; the failure to get into the war offensively in the early months; and the violation of sound military principles by the Navy Department, especially in handling from Washington details of operations which should have been left to the commanders afloat.

X

In discussing the activities of the Navy Department from 1913 to 1917, Admiral Mayo again emphasized the failure to

provide the fleet with adequate personnel. The outbreak of war in Europe, he said, "forced attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the fleet." Plans were made to assemble the fleet and put it in as good shape as possible. These could not be carried out until 1915, however, as the Secretary kept the battleships in Mexican waters on gunboat duty.

The attempt to get the vessels into good condition,

"emphasized the fact that available personnel was not sufficient. . . . This subject became acute and was discussed and considered by the Department and Congress. The discussion continued but did not result in the addition of any adequate number of trained men or officers to the fleet prior to our entry into the war.

"In August, 1916, additional personnel was authorized. Our entry into the war came before these increases became effective."

When the battleships went to Cuban waters for training in 1916, many vessels "owing to the shortage of personnel" were left behind in reserve. "The shortage of personnel was as acute as before."

In 1916, when the Reserve Fleet was placed under Admiral Mayo's command, "there was inadequate personnel available to place these ships in anything like the condition desired."

XI

At the time of the breach of diplomatic relations, the Atlantic Fleet was in Guantanamo Bay. At this time, the Fleet consisted of 12 battleships, 22 destroyers and 6 other vessels, a total of 40 units out of the 300 then on the Navy list.

Plans were prepared for the defence of the fleet against submarines and a campaign order was issued providing against any surprise attack. On February 5th, the fleet left Guantanamo for the Gulf of Guacanayabo, where it could be

more easily protected. It remained at anchor in this Cuban bay until the end of March. The exchange of messages between Admiral Mayo and the Department, indicates that almost the only subject considered was the defence of the fleet against attack, in these sheltered waters three thousand miles from the enemy!

On February 12, 1917, the Department cabled: "Do you feel that the fleet is properly protected from possible submarine attack? If not what changes do you suggest? Do you advise bringing the fleet north or not?" To which Admiral Mayo replied that defence arrangements were satisfactory; that "ships change anchorage frequently and darken except during gunnery work. Recommend fleet remain South for the present."

The destroyers of the fleet were kept on active anti-submarine patrol duty. Eight of them were ordered North with the battleship *Illinois* by the Department on March 3rd, leaving 11 battleships and 14 destroyers in the fleet.

On March 20th, Admiral Mayo was directed to proceed north to Hampton Roads. The fleet sailed on March 23, reaching its destination on March 27th. Admiral Mayo, on March 28th "proceeded to Washington to consult with the Chief of Naval Operations with regard to possible activities."

In discussing the condition of the Fleet on the eve of war, its commander-in-chief said:

"it was in the best state of preparedness it had ever been, and there was a feeling of confidence in the personnel of being able to cope with any emergency; the personnel was, however, on a peace basis and the transfer of trained personnel for armed guard and other duty was already being felt in a decrease of efficiency. . . . However, it should be pointed out that this fleet was lacking in types of vessels essential to efficiency, such as battle cruisers, scout cruisers, light cruisers and fleet submarines, and, furthermore, none are now available."

During the period after February 2, Admiral Mayo had received no intimation from the Navy Department about preparing for war, no instructions as to what arrangements he should make, nor no indication of any definite plans or policies, such as the commander of our main fleet, with war imminent, should have received.

On February 23rd, a letter had been received from the Secretary commenting upon the part of the fleet campaign order of February 3rd, which directed the clearing of a channel "of submarine and mines." The Secretary made the following astonishing statement:

"The order to 'clear' the channel of submarines could have been interpreted as authorizing the use of force against any submarines found therein. The Department assumes that it was the Commander-in-Chief's intention to sweep the channel for possible mines and to search for and report submarines, not to operate offensively against them"!

To this disconcerting illustration of the "neutrality" of Mr. Daniels, Admiral Mayo replied: "Intention was distinctly to authorize use of force against such vessels found in vicinity of fleet, or approaching fleet. Similar orders are now in force and are considered essential to safety of fleet, as intentions of any such vessels are assumed to be hostile."

On March 11, an order was received from the Bureau of Navigation to send north 30 gun crews. Admiral Mayo remarked that

"this order, issued by a bureau, reduced the military efficiency of the anti-torpedo defence of the battleship force. The policy on which such an order must have been based was not made known to the Commander-in-Chief. . . . It was assumed that the policy had the approval of the Chief of Naval Operations. . . .

"It was realized that the active fleet contained the major part of the trained personnel of the service, and that it would have to supply the demands for personnel for other duties,

hence full and hearty co-operation was given to the Bureau of Navigation in the great work of expansion."

After arriving in Washington, Admiral Mayo said that "no written plan or policy was given to me, but from conversation I understood the policy as follows:

"The Atlantic Fleet to be maintained in readiness for active operations. No vessels to be sent to navy yards unless in need of major repairs. Fleet to continue training of gun crews for armed guard duty."

This was just one week before the declaration of war!

While in Washington, Admiral Mayo learned of the intention to organize a "Patrol Force," a step which "was an entire change of organization policy." On April 4th, he received orders to organize this Patrol Force and to assign to it all destroyers that could be spared. Admiral Mayo believed that no destroyers could be spared, and that, on the contrary, another flotilla was needed by the fleet, as "it should be noted that no policy with regard to the future service of the battleships had been decided upon."

On April 5th, Admiral Mayo was informed by the Department, in reply to his request to know the orders of the Patrol Force, that

"The mission of the Patrol Force will be issued by the Department, through the Commander-in-Chief."

Admiral Mayo believed this to be the first indication "of a false policy, namely, control of active operations of subordinate forces by the Department." This was the same criticism that Admiral Sims had previously made with regard to operations in Europe.

On April 6th, orders were received from the Department to mobilize for war. Arrangements had already been made to protect the fleet at anchor in the York River so "no modification of existing conditions in the fleet were required ex-

cept the establishment of censorship and the commencement of war diaries." This then was what constituted our mobilization for war of which Mr. Daniels spoke so often and so exultantly. The fleet was mobilized, he said, five hours after war began. True; but all that really happened was that the sailors' mail was subjected to censorship and a war diary was started! At this time the only policies or plans of the Department, of which Admiral Mayo had any information, were that the fleet would supply armed guard crews and train other personnel; that a patrol force had been formed to patrol the Atlantic coast; and that the battleship force would be maintained intact. "At this time I had no information as to any contemplated employment of any vessels in European waters in co-operation with the Allies."

XII

Admiral Mayo himself took no active part in operations against Germany during the war. In spite of repeated recommendations to the Department he was not ordered to duty abroad. The forces he commanded remained in American waters, training many thousands of officers and men for other duties, and trying to maintain themselves in a condition of readiness for battle. Admiral Mayo, however, made two trips to Europe; one in August and September, 1917, to attend a naval conference of the Allies; the other in the summer of 1918 to inspect the naval forces in European waters. He had therefore become fairly familiar with the conditions under which our forces abroad fought. Through his conferences with the Navy Department, he had become even more familiar with the methods and policies of that Department.

In illustration of the departmental point of view in the first month of the war, Admiral Mayo told of the conferences with Vice Admiral Browning, R. N., and Rear Admiral

Grasset, commanders of the British and French patrol forces in the Western Atlantic. Admiral Mayo said that on April 10th, at a conference at the Hotel Chamberlain at Old Point Comfort, attended by the two foreign officers and by Admiral Benson, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mayo and Rear Admiral H. B. Wilson, the commander of the Patrol Force:

"Vice Admiral Browning explained the mission of his force, and read a communication from the British Admiralty interrogating the representatives of the United States as to the nature of the assistance the United States Navy was prepared to render, and *stating the desire of the British Admiralty for assistance, especially in anti-submarine craft.* Rear Admiral Grasset explained the mission of his division and requested that the United States assist in the patrol of the Caribbean.

"Admiral Benson stated that the present policy of the United States Navy was to maintain the fleet intact and to assist in the patrol of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States and waters adjacent thereto."

This then was our naval policy on entering the war, as stated to Allied officials on April 10th, 1917, by the military head of the Navy Department and the chief adviser of Secretary Daniels! There was no suggestion of co-operation with the Allies; no hint of offensive action against the common enemy! "Safety first" was to be the motto; we were to maintain our fleet "intact" and "assist in the patrol" of waters adjacent to our coasts; in other words, we were not even to assume the full responsibility for our own coastal defence, but were merely to "assist" the Allied forces that had been defending us for the previous two and a half years!

Such a policy must have disconcerted the Allied representatives. They had come to present the needs of the Allies. They were stonily received, their requests rebuffed. That they were not satisfied, may easily be inferred from Admiral Mayo's statement that the conference adjourned to meet on the following day in Washington, "as Vice Admiral

Browning considered his instructions required a conference with the Secretary of the Navy."

What a commentary this is, on Mr. Daniels' repeated assertions of the "bold and audacious policies," and the "desire for complete co-operation" that inspired the Navy Department from the day the war began! The Allied representatives were permitted an audience with the Secretary only at their own insistence. They were not even invited to visit Washington, by Admiral Benson, whose attitude may be explained by the fact that two weeks before he had been as ready "to fight the British as the Germans!"

The conference on April 11th, as reported by Admiral Mayo, was equally illuminating. In addition to the officers who had attended the previous conference, there were present Secretary Daniels, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt and two members of the General Board, Rear Admirals Fletcher and Badger. It is not difficult to imagine the atmosphere which such a group created as they faced the Allied representatives. Josephus Daniels, Admirals Benson, Badger, F. F. Fletcher, Wilson! No wonder the French and British admirals lost heart and reported to their chiefs that "too much reliance" should not be placed on help from America.

Admiral Mayo is significantly brief in describing this second conference. He says only:

"The subjects discussed were similar to those of the previous day. The following decisions were reached:

"(a) *Although the present policy of the United States required that the fleet be kept intact,* a division of destroyers (six vessels) will be sent to European waters to co-operate with the allied anti-submarine forces in that area.

"(b) United States to patrol on Atlantic coast of United States and assist in the patrol of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico."

Such then was the war policy of our Navy Department in April, 1917!

XIII

Subsequently, the Department apparently modified its policy to take into consideration the existence of a state of war in Europe. At least, Admiral Mayo testified that on April 28th, 1917 (N. B. the day after Ambassador Page had first appealed to the President for action on Admiral Sims' recommendations):

"I was informed of the *new* policy relative to assignment of destroyers to assist in anti-submarine operations *in co-operation with the British.*"

Admiral Mayo had been orally instructed, on April 12th, to prepare six destroyers for service abroad. On April 18th, the Department was asked for information as to the destination of these destroyers. On April 24th, the six destroyers received orders directly from the Department to go to Queenstown. On April 26th, Admiral Mayo received orders to send six more destroyers to home yards to fit out for distant service. "No change in policy was received." The Department "gave no information or plan on which this order was based."

The "new" policy of "co-operation with the British" in anti-submarine operations was imparted to Mayo on April 28th, as indicated above. On the same day orders were issued to prepare a third division of six destroyers for distant service, and on May 1, 24 additional destroyers and the *Dixie* received similar orders.

The information in the last paragraph was all that Admiral Mayo was able to obtain in the first month of the war about our war policies and plans. He testified that up to May 5, 1917, "I had received no definite statement of the Department's policy with regard to material readiness of the battleships for possible active service in European waters."

It was imperative that, as commander of the fleet, he

should know something of what might be expected of his vessels. He had received no war plans, nor anything even faintly resembling a war plan. He had been ordered to mobilize for war, and had mobilized by establishing a censorship, starting a war diary and keeping behind the anti-submarine net. But in war mobilization implies, normally, belligerent activities on the part of a belligerent's main fighting force. Naturally, Mayo wondered a little about what was coming. So on May 5th he wrote the Department that the battleships "are, in general not now in proper material condition to operate indefinitely from some foreign base" and urged that all vessels be sent to the navy yards for essential repairs. "The Commander-in-Chief is without definite information as to the Department's policy regarding material matters."

On May 18th, Admiral Mayo was informed that nine converted yachts had been ordered to fit out for distant service. On June 3rd, destroyers were ordered to report to Rear Admiral Gleaves but it was not until June 7th that Admiral Mayo, while in Washington, learned the details of the first troop convoy, which Gleaves was to command and which was to sail only a week later. Admiral Mayo said of this:

"I was not properly informed of these activities, nor of the status of the various commanders to whom the Department was issuing orders direct."

The Commander-in-Chief of the fleet was not only not consulted by the Department but was ignored. Orders direct from Washington were issued to his subordinates and to vessels of his force, without his even being notified. In a letter of June 13, 1917, Admiral Mayo officially protested against these gross breaches of military principles, pointing out that, although the forces abroad, the cruisers in the South Atlantic, the Patrol Force, Admiral Gleaves' convoy force, were parts of the Atlantic Fleet, the Commander-in-

Chief " has only a very general knowledge " of their activities. Admiral Mayo therefore urged that he be informed " of the exact status of the several naval forces now operating in the Atlantic."

The Navy Department did not reply to this letter until July 9th, and then only enclosed copies of orders issued a few days before assigning these forces to the Atlantic Fleet, but instructing them to report directly to the Department.

The first statement of the Department's general war policy received by Admiral Mayo, came to him in July, in the form of a copy of the letter of July 3rd from the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of State, to which Admiral Sims had previously referred, as the first indication of policy he likewise had received. Similarly, it was not until July 4th that Mayo learned of " a new policy, that of using U. S. cruisers to escort merchant convoys." Admiral Mayo had not been consulted about this.

So, in chaos and confusion, without plans or policies, struggling blindly to find out what to do and how to do it, the Navy went through those first critical months of the war.

XIV

At the end of July the Department, for reasons yet to be explained, began to take a more active interest in the needs of the Allies. They requested that an international naval conference be held in London to tell the Navy Department what it should do. They had been receiving for four months the recommendations made by Admiral Sims, after consultation and agreement with the allied leaders, but they had almost uniformly pigeonholed these and had failed, not only to act upon them, but even to reply to them.

Now, at the end of July, 1917, it apparently seemed inevitable to the Navy Department that something should be

done. Yet Admiral Sims was known to be pro-British and pro-French. His recommendations were, therefore, hardly to be trusted. He had insisted too vigorously on a prosecution of the war against Germany. This must have seemed a lamentable prejudice to men who a few months before had been as ready "to fight the British as the Germans," and who considered even in March, 1917, that it was none of Admiral Sims' business "to think who our enemy might be!" (See testimony of Secretary Daniels, February 10th, 1920.)

The Department therefore decided to send Admiral Mayo to Europe to find out what was really going on. The definite object of his mission, according to Mayo's own statement, could only be inferred from the conversations he had with President Wilson, Secretary Daniels, Admiral Benson and others; for, as Admiral Mayo indicated in his report, "The instructions received from the Navy Department as to the purpose and object of the visit to England and France were not in definite and concrete form. . . . A summary based on the above-mentioned conversations was made (while en route to England) in order to enable definite inquiries to be made to the governments concerned."

Such was the efficiency of Mr. Daniels' Department. After failing to act offensively for four months, they failed to give to Admiral Mayo, their representative at a Naval Council of all the Allies, called at their own request, any definite instructions or any detailed statement of what he was to find out. He was left to "infer" these things, and to make up his own questions from his memory of conversations!

In his report Admiral Mayo said that the principal matters he had to take up "were understood" to be eleven in number. *First*, "What has been done" (apparently a history of all war operations and experience); *Second*, "What is being done"—a review of the situation in all areas; *Third*, "What is to be done,"— all plans for future operations, the help expected from the U. S., the enemy and

allied building programs, etc.! *Fourth,* a description of anti-submarine measures under way and proposed; *Fifth,* the aircraft situation and the help the U. S. can give; *Sixth,* the shipping situation, as it affects the Allied communications; *Seventh,* the transfer of U. S. troops to France and the shipping required; *Eighth,* Inquiries in the matter of seeking for trade, the employment of oilers belonging to private companies and the rumoured transfer of men-of-war *after the war; Ninth,* the international naval conference, "which the United States had asked the British government to arrange"; *Tenth,* consideration of the possibility of Norway entering the war, and the possibility of the capture of Russian ships by the Germans; *Eleventh,* "General impressions regarding political, economic and morale conditions in the allied countries."

Truly, the Navy Department imposed a modest task upon Admiral Mayo!

All this information could not possibly have been collected by a few officers in a few weeks. The Navy Department had already received much of it from Admiral Sims and would have received everything of importance months before if Admiral Sims had been provided with assistance.

Admiral Mayo and his staff discussed these eleven points with the representatives of the various Allied governments and with Admiral Sims. The naval conference of September 4th and 5th submitted recommendations to the Navy Department, identical in all essentials with those Admiral Sims had been recommending since April. Admiral Mayo strongly endorsed these and urged the Navy Department to decide on its policy and to act. In his report dated October 11, 1917, Admiral Mayo in fact said:

"(a) The military-naval situation among the Allies is such that it is strongly recommended that the United States make *the earliest possible decision as to what forms and extent the assistance to be given shall take* and then proceed to exert every effort

to expedite the production, dispatch and employment of such assistance. *Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of the time element.*

" (b) It is further recommended that time be not lost in attempting greater development or improvement of material, which has already reached a fairly satisfactory state of development abroad, but *that all energy be directed to reproducing such satisfactory material at the maximum possible rate.*"

If any further confirmation of Admiral Sims' criticism, that the Navy Department failed for six months to enter the war actively, in co-operation with the Allies, were needed, the fact that Admiral Mayo still found it necessary to make the recommendations above quoted, on October 11, 1917, is in itself abundant proof. Admiral Sims had made exactly the same recommendations six months before, on April 14, 1917, and had been repeating them vainly almost daily. The six most critical months of the war had been lost by the indecision, procrastination, or worse, of Secretary Daniels and his naval advisers.

XV

Admiral Mayo himself commented very forcibly on the Navy's unpreparedness in 1917. He pointed out that:

" Had the conditions not permitted the use of the battleships for training the personnel, the ability of the Navy to man transports, anti-torpedo craft and cargo ships would have been seriously decreased.

" Such a condition cannot be considered satisfactory, and the country should realize that the shortage of officers and enlisted personnel was at the beginning of the war, and is today, the most serious handicap under which the Navy is almost hopelessly striving for efficiency.

" The quotations . . . from my report on my trip to Europe indicate plainly my opinion of the conditions existing at that time. . . .

"Our experience has taught us to look critically at our past history with a different point of view from that generally held before the war. *I hope the lesson of unpreparedness has been brought home to the country and to Congress. The present tendency seems to be a return toward the unsatisfactory condition which is the cause of this investigation.*

"In a consideration of the effect of our failure to be prepared and of our progress in preparation after the policy was definitely settled upon (i. e. after October, 1917), it must never be forgotten that these preparations were made under conditions which may never happen again, and that to rely on such conditions existing again would be folly. These conditions were: the enemy fleet contained by an Allied navy and the enemy army fully engaged with the Allied armies. These conditions permitted the United States Navy to prepare uninterruptedly (i. e., after war was declared), for even no enemy submarines appeared in United States waters for nearly 14 months after the declaration of war."

Admiral Mayo insisted emphatically that the responsibility for such unpreparedness did not lie with the officers of the fleet, and that:

"So far as was within the province of the Commander-in-Chief, the fleet was prepared for any emergency. . . . There never was a time when I or my staff failed to keep in touch with the general situation or neglected, so far as we are aware, any action or recommendation which we believed would increase the effectiveness of our Navy in the World War."

The responsibility for the conditions that existed in 1917, were attributed by Admiral Mayo to various causes.

"Our inability to throw the full weight of our resources into the war upon our entry into it, was due primarily to our national policies (i. e. Daniels' pacifism). . . ."

"As to the broad general plans and policies of the Department for the conduct of war, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations was not authorized until 1915 and *then only against considerable opposition.* Its scope never was, and is not now, sufficiently comprehensive to ensure the best plans and policies for

the preparation of or the conduct of war. Without the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, conditions in the Navy immediately preceding and during the war would have been chaotic, and no one can say what would have happened. . . . If the office of the Chief of Naval Operations had been in existence longer, with even more power and responsibilities, a better state of preparedness would have resulted."

XVI

In his summary at the end of his testimony, Admiral Mayo briefly explained the reasons for the existence of the conditions described by previous witnesses and in his own testimony. He again stated that:

"It is my opinion that the material unpreparedness of the vessels in reserve and out of commission, and the shortage of personnel, was due primarily to the national policy of strict neutrality, with its resultant effect of a failure to prepare against war. It should be recalled by contrast that Holland and Switzerland remained neutral during the entire war. They were ready to defend their neutrality. . . ."

"The next most serious detriment to efficient preparation is the organization of the Navy Department. The laws and regulations under which the Navy was operating during the war, and is operating today, are unsatisfactory."

After explaining the confusion of authority, and lack of any military co-ordination of activities in the Navy Department, Admiral Mayo said:

"So long as the present organization exists the maximum efficiency, either in preparation for war, in the conduct of war, or in economical development of the Navy in peace, cannot be obtained.

"In the present organization responsibility for the readiness of the Navy for war cannot be placed anywhere but with the Secretary of the Navy, who, under the present organization, must co-ordinate 13 offices, boards, and bureaus.

" Every dollar spent on our Navy should be spent with a view to the accomplishment of a definite plan of preparation for war. The Navy is built for war, and unless the Chief of Naval Operations, under the Secretary of the Navy, is held responsible for the preparation, readiness, completeness, and effectiveness of plans for national defence, including plans for the development of the Navy, plans for its maintenance and plans for its use, and is given power under the Secretary of the Navy to exercise supervision through the bureaus, boards, and offices, over all naval activities, the maximum efficiency cannot be attained.

" In my opinion, the faulty organization of the Navy Department, and the absence of definite foreign policy, except that of strict neutrality, were the primary causes of failure to prepare the entire Navy for war.

" After definite policies and plans were definitely settled upon, after money was appropriated, and after the Bureaus voluntarily co-ordinated with the Chief of Naval Operations, the work was pushed with energy and vigour. The accomplishments were excellent. *But our delay in preparation did no doubt delay our assistance to the Allies at a critical time, and if such conditions regarding our preparation for war exist in the future they may result in disaster.*

" My statement also includes criticisms of another nature, namely, that I was not kept informed of policies nor properly consulted with regard to operations in the western Atlantic. As an example, the failure to consult me before ordering Rear Admiral Gleaves to organize and conduct the first troop escort operation.

" In my opinion, authority was so centralized in the Department that it resulted in the neglect of the principle of " due subdivision of labour and decentralization of responsibility." Centralized control over policy and general plans is sound, but centralized control over details of execution most often results in loss of efficiency.

XVII

Many other matters were dwelt upon by Admiral Mayo, but the part of his testimony chiefly concerned with the is-

sues involved have been described. He introduced many documents to support every statement of fact and his testimony, like that of Admiral Sims', was remarkably free from any purely personal opinions and from personal reflections. It was obvious that Admiral Mayo was not, in any sense of the word, a participant in a naval quarrel. His testimony was a simple narrative of what our Navy's condition and operations were in 1917, in so far as the Commander-in-Chief of our main fleet was able to observe them.

In some matters, mostly of detail, such as the refitting of battleships, the disposition of forces and the condition of Admiral Rodman's battleship division, Admiral Mayo took issue with Admiral Sims. In substance, however, his testimony proved that the Navy was unprepared for war in 1917; that its vessels were not in the best of condition and were all short of men; that our Navy had no policy of offensive action or co-operation with the Allies at the beginning of the war or for several months afterward; that the Navy Department had no suitable war plans and very little machinery for making them; that, for at least the first six months of the war, we failed to participate actively with our available naval resources; and that the Navy Department, in its conduct of war operations, violated many of the most fundamental axioms of warfare.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet was therefore in substantial agreement with the commander in European waters, with the Chief and Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, with the Chief Assistant in the Material Branch of the Office of Operations, and with the officer, Captain J. K. Taussig, who after serving three years in the Enlisted Personnel Division, had not only the distinction of commanding the first division of destroyers to go overseas in 1917, but also that of adding another famous phrase to our naval history, when he replied to the question of the Admiral

commanding at Queenstown as to when his vessels would be ready for service:

"We are ready, now, Sir!"

Such is the spirit of our Navy. It was this spirit that made possible our naval successes in the war, in spite of unpreparedness and in spite of maladministration in Washington. The officers and men of the naval service were placed in a position of tremendous difficulty, facing almost insuperable handicaps, as a result of Mr. Daniels' failure since 1913 to make any effort to get the Navy ready for war. That they were able to overcome them, and eventually to make the Navy effective in the war, in spite of Mr. Daniels and his policies, is the outstanding achievement of the officers and men of the naval service in the war. Their courage and efficiency does not excuse the Secretary of the Navy, however, from responsibility for the handicaps his policies had imposed upon the Navy.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIGHT FOR PREPAREDNESS — 1913–1915

(The Testimony of Rear Admiral Fiske)

I

REAR ADMIRAL FISKE has long been recognized as one of the ablest officers of our Navy. He has contributed in many ways to the upbuilding of our naval strength, both in its material development and in its training for war. Many of his inventions have contributed greatly to the revolutionary improvements made in naval gunnery in the last generation. For a decade before 1913 he had struggled for better organization in the Navy and for the adoption of sound policies based on our national needs and upon the accepted principles of naval science.

His close association with Mr. Daniels from 1913 to 1915, when he was the Secretary's sole military adviser, had given him unique opportunities to become familiar with the methods and policies imposed on the Navy Department by Mr. Daniels. In his testimony before the Senate Committee he told of his insistent but vain efforts to make Daniels realize that the Navy existed for the purpose of fighting, and that the whole effort of the Navy Department should be devoted to making it fit to fight. Admiral Fiske, in describing the activities of the Secretary, also disclosed the degree of misrepresentation that had characterized the latter's official reports and public statements.

II

In beginning his testimony, Admiral Fiske reviewed briefly his own services in the Navy Department. In August, 1910, as a Captain, he had been appointed to the General Board of the Navy and had been for a year in charge of its war plans section. In this position he was responsible, under Admiral Dewey, "for the preparation and readiness of the war plans of the Navy." From his study of military history he had come to a full realization of the necessity of adequate war plans. He soon found that the existing plans were extremely meagre and unsatisfactory.

Strange as it may seem, but few officers in the Navy at that time (1910) had really studied the art of war. They had learned to handle the vessels of the Navy in peace time with great skill and efficiency; they had not learned how to use the Navy as a successful machine for waging war. The Naval War College was still regarded as a "highbrow" institution; its teachings were scorned by the "practical" salty variety of naval officers who still believed in rule of thumb methods and who had failed to realize that naval warfare had changed since Nelson's day.

The Navy Department at that time had still no organization adapted to meet the needs of war. There existed no adequate machinery for making war plans, for preparing the Navy for war in time of peace or for conducting naval operations in time of war. The General Board was charged with preparing plans, but its status was doubtful and at best only advisory. The Aide for Operations was merely a personal adviser to the Secretary and could take no action himself. It was not surprising, therefore, that Fiske found in 1910 that "the war plans were extremely meagre and did not embody even one per cent. of what war plans should embody."

During his service he did his best, with only two assistants, to improve the plans, but lack of time and experience greatly

handicapped him. The task was one that required the continuous services of many trained officers. These were not available.

When Admiral Fiske accepted the position of Aide for Operations in February, 1913, he did so

"with a grave sense of my responsibilities; especially because the failure of the Declaration of London put the whole status of international law, as applied to maritime affairs, in a condition of approximate chaos; so that if any war should occur between any great European nations, the position of the United States, as a neutral, would be almost impossible to maintain. Had the Navy been prepared for war, I should not have felt so much concerned. but I knew that the Navy was not only unprepared in personnel and material, but that it did not even have any plan for even entering an important war."

Admiral Fiske fully realized also that under modern conditions the planning organization should be the "original source from which all work starts, because not only the actual operations of war, but all previous measures of preparation of personnel and material are taken up after the decisions of the planning division have been made and approved. . . . The first thing necessary to do in order to prepare a Navy for war is to prepare a plan of war."

III

Josephus Daniels became Secretary of the Navy on March 4, 1913. Admiral Fiske said that he was much relieved when he found the new Secretary "to be a delightful gentleman, companionable, sympathetic and apparently open minded. He announced his desire to make the Navy efficient."

It was not long, however, before Fiske learned that Mr. Daniels did not even understand what constitutes the efficiency of the Navy. An ardent pacifist of the Bryan school, the new Secretary would not discuss war or take any

interest in preparedness for war. By August, 1913, Admiral Fiske had come " to realize that the Secretary's mental characteristics and his previous training were not such as to give him the capacity to regard the Navy as a whole. His tendency was to concentrate his attention on some one part of the Navy, usually connected with its personnel, and to exaggerate its importance."

Admiral Fiske, as chief military adviser to the Secretary, spent many trying and fruitless hours trying to explain to him the A B C's of naval warfare. Mr. Daniels listened courteously enough, but it was all too obvious that he never understood. He took a keen interest in personnel questions, in the welfare of enlisted men, in getting chaplains and laundries and electric stoves for the battleships. He saw the necessity of building battleships, and delighted in the largeness and power of our modern dreadnaughts. But his mind could not grasp the idea that the battleships were useless unless so manned and prepared as to be ready for war.

In the summer of 1913, Admiral Fiske took the Secretary to the Naval War College, hoping that the latter after seeing the work there and after talking to the officers at the college might grasp at least the fundamental ideas of what a Navy's purpose is and of how it should be administered. Mr. Daniels listened patiently but learned nothing.

IV

On August 26, 1913, Admiral Fiske drew up a memorandum on " Administration of the Navy Department " which he submitted to the Secretary with an accompanying explanatory letter. The memorandum gave as its reference " Exodus, Chapter XVIII, paragraph 13, et seq." Starting with this Biblical text, it described with remarkable conciseness the purpose for which the Navy and the Navy Department exists, as a few passages will indicate.

"The mission of the Navy is to maintain itself in the maximum possible degree of readiness for war in order that honourable peace may be maintained; or if war comes, in order that honourable peace may be re-established in the shortest possible time."

". . . No matter what the condition of a navy may be *when judged by a non-competing standard,* neither its strength nor its efficiency nor its readiness for war are what they should be unless it can compete successfully with the navies of probable enemies."

". . . The mission of the Navy Department is to so administer the affairs of the Navy as to maintain the Navy in the maximum possible degree of readiness for war. . . . Every decision as to naval administration should be derived from this general mission."

". . . The first and highest mission of the Secretary is so to co-ordinate the efforts of the Navy as a whole with efforts of other departments of the government as best to further national ends. . . ."

". . . The second mission of the Secretary is so to administer the affairs of the Navy, through the Navy Department, as to maintain the Navy in the maximum possible degree of readiness for war. . . .

"Efficient administration requires that there be unity of action, co-ordination of effort . . . a supreme authority flowing downward, through subordinates, in defined channels, to individuals. This arrangement permits to high authority time for the consideration of the great questions and delegates to subordinates questions graded in importance to the station and abilities of those subordinates. . . . Wherever high authority is so submerged in details that it cannot give proper attention to great questions as they arise, there we find the sources of the inefficiency. A badly conceived intention of high authority rapidly spreads its influence through every ramification of the organization. . . ."

For the next seven years Mr. Daniels continued to violate the very principles of organization here described with the identical result here depicted! Absorbed in details, he left important matters undecided or made wrong decisions

through lack of proper information and understanding of naval matters. None is so blind as he who will not see!

V

Admiral Fiske in the letter he sent the Secretary, forwarding the memorandum above quoted, pointed out, by reference to history, the necessity of having an efficient naval staff, proper war plans, and a navy ready for war. Thus, for example, he said:

"To get the Navy into readiness for war and keep it in readiness is not only the duty of the Secretary, it is his paramount duty. . . . When war breaks out all the forces that will determine the result are already in existence. . . . Therefore, far above and beyond all minor responsibilities, the direct and immediate responsibility of the Secretary of the Navy is the Navy's readiness for war."

Admiral Fiske then pointed out that the German victory in 1870 was due simply to the superior preparation of the Germans, made possible by their general staff and its careful planning work. All European countries had profited by the lesson. The United States Navy alone had disregarded it. The U. S. Army had been given a general staff, but the Navy still had an organization with no provision for the proper delegation of authority, no co-ordination of activities and no machinery for the preparation and execution of war plans.

"Under the present system much of the time of the Secretary of the Navy . . . must be devoted to comparatively unimportant questions. . . . Much of it is spent on matters that a subordinate could handle, with the result that the amount of time he can give to important questions is abbreviated. He is sometimes compelled to delay the consideration of matters in which some subordinate needs a decision. . . .

"The organization of the Navy Department is entirely differ-

ent from that of any other of which the writer has knowledge. . . . In every efficient organization great or small, the head of the organization handles it as a unit through the heads of the various divisions. He alone, at the top, handles no separate divisions. . . . The heads of divisions have authority in their divisions and should be held responsible to the chief not for details, but for results. Those principles . . . are common to every great organization of the world . . . that is efficiently handled. . . . If in these organizations a system is necessary, in which the heads of the organizations do not directly manage each department, but simply manage the heads of the departments, how much more is it necessary in our Navy Department, of which the Secretary is a civilian, who cannot be familiar with the details, and must therefore trust to his subordinates."

For nearly two years longer Admiral Fiske continued his endeavour to make Secretary Daniels understand these elementary principles of organization. The Secretary apparently was incapable of understanding. He himself testified that the only effect of Fiske's efforts was to "bore him to distraction." In fact, as Admiral Fiske himself said:

"He seemed to me to have a curious characteristic of not looking at the Navy as a whole and it has always seemed to me that he was absolutely convinced in his own mind that there never would be another war. I found after a while that it was not a good thing to say anything to him about war. He did not seem to be ready to start on any subject connected with war at all. He approached the subject from a different point of view. To bring up a question in connection with the men or something like that, would secure his interest, but if you brought up anything in connection with the efficiency of the Navy and its part in the war, why that was not good. *We must avoid that subject.* I gave up using the word 'war' as much as I could. . . . It was very difficult as a rule to get him to take any action whatever. He was always polite. He would listen to you with the most untiring patience. He was always courteous. Then he would usually wind up by saying, 'Speak to me about this tomorrow, or next week.'"

VI

Throughout 1913 and the early part of 1914, Admiral Fiske had little or no success in getting any action toward making the navy ready for war. In fact the Secretary "was nettled," said Fiske, "at my insistence on certain measures of preparedness." In the summer of 1913, Daniels even wanted to send Fiske out of the Department to serve at the Naval War College, and only Admiral Dewey's insistence that Fiske should remain caused the Secretary to postpone exiling the officer who "bored" him by trying to make the Navy ready for war.

As an illustration of the situation, Admiral Fiske referred to the Secretary's refusal for two years to approve the General Board's "Administrative Plan." In 1913, the General Board submitted to Mr. Daniels an administrative plan which "provided that the various bureaus and the department itself should co-operate toward preparedness by means of a system of reports which each bureau would make to the Department once every three months, in regard to the status of that bureau in preparedness."

Admiral Fiske urged that the plan be approved, only to meet with an experience which he described to the committee in the following words:

"I was unable to get the Secretary to approve the administrative plan during my entire term of office with him, though it lasted more than two years until May 11, 1915. I frequently brought it to his attention and asked him to sign it, pointing out that until he had signed it, it was utterly impossible for the Navy even to start toward a state of preparedness; and that it was necessary for him to sign it as soon as possible, because even after he had signed it, it would take several years before war plans could be made and developed and the Navy got ready in accordance with them. On every occasion the Secretary declined to sign the paper."

Yet in May, 1920, Secretary Daniels boasted before the Senate committee of his foresightedness in approving this very plan on May 28, 1915. He neglected to say that he had refused for two years to approve this measure which constituted only the initial step towards preparedness. It should not be forgotten that he had thus delayed by two years the first step toward readiness for war!

VII

The outbreak of the war in Europe brought home to Admiral Fiske with additional force the perilous condition of our Navy. At a time when it seemed probable that we would be compelled to go to war to protect our national interests our Navy was wholly unprepared. The battleship fleet had been for many months in Mexican waters engaged in gunboat duty. It was not in good material shape; its training had been neglected in the complications of the Vera Cruz incident. It was short thousands of men. Its gunnery efficiency was very low indeed. Admiral Fiske had realized for some time that the European War was brewing. But in answer to his repeated warnings and recommendations Mr. Daniels had smiled indulgently, ridiculed the idea of war and refused to approve any action intended to prepare our Navy for possible eventualities.

On July 31, 1914, Admiral Fiske had arrived at Newport, where the General Board was then located for the summer. In order that steps might be taken at once to meet the situation created by the beginning of a general European war, he asked Admiral Knight to call a special meeting of the General Board. This Knight did,

"and we spent the day of August 1, 1914, in preparing and sending (to the Navy Department) a letter in which we pointed out the various dangers of the United States being drawn into the war, and the consequent necessity of making certain preparations."

It was in connection with this General Board letter of August 1, 1914, that Secretary Daniels, on April 21, 1916, made incorrect statements to the United States Senate, officially and in writing, in order to conceal his own criminal failure to make any effort to improve the efficiency and preparedness of the Navy.

The parts of this General Board letter of especial interest were:

"NAVAL WAR COLLEGE,
"Newport, R. I., August 1, 1914.

"From: Senior member present.
"To: Secretary of the Navy.
"Subject: Withdrawal of battleships to home yards.

"In view of the immediate danger of a great war in Europe, and in pursuance of its duties as laid down in paragraph R 167 (a) of the Navy Regulations, the *General Board earnestly urges that the battleships be brought home, docked and put in perfect readiness,* with the exception of the ships actually necessary in Caribbean and Mexican waters.

"(2) The present situation in Europe is absolutely without precedent; not only in the vast extent and variety of the interests involved, but in the suddenness with which it has developed.

"(3) It is not clear at this moment that any interests of the United States are threatened. Yet it would be rash to assume that there may not emerge from the extraordinary situation in which so large a part of the world has become unexpectedly involved some incident or combination of incidents fraught with danger to our interests.

"(4) Our commercial interests are closely interwoven with those of every one of the great powers which are apparently on the verge of war. Our trade routes pass through the waters of those powers and terminate in their ports. Our privileges and duties as neutrals may easily become matters of misunderstanding and controversy.

. . . . . .

" (7) In the event of a general European war, it is probable that foreign shipping will endeavor to register under the United States flag. The shipping then needed adequately to supply the war requirements of European nations will be enormous. Many questions of neutrality, or alleged breaches of neutrality, may, in the irritable condition of public opinion at home and abroad, result in strained relations; and notwithstanding all efforts to the contrary, may further result in the embroilment of this country with some country or countries of Europe.

" (8) Again, the merchants of the United States will certainly endeavour to supply immense quantities of munitions of war, arms, ammunition, fuel, food, and other warlike supplies, with the resulting accusation that the country has become a base from which war is supported against friendly nations in violation of its proclamation of neutrality.

" (9) There are other possible complications: Belligerents always tend to overstep their powers in executing the right of search; disputes will arise over the definition of contraband; and accusations of unneutral service will be brought against the United States traders and foreigners doing business under the United States flag.

" (10) A serious possibility for the United States connected with a great European war lies in the changes of sovereignty in possessions on or adjacent to the American Continent that may result from corresponding changes in sovereignty on the Continent of Europe. We cannot forecast the eventualities of such a war. Many indications exist that Germany desires a foothold in American waters, and it is well known that she does not concur in the Monroe Doctrine. If Great Britain is drawn into war the German fleet will be neutralized as far as any danger from it to our interests in the immediate future is concerned. If she is not, and if the end of the war should find Germany stronger than ever in her European position and with her fleet practically unimpaired, the temptation will be great to seize the opportunity for obtaining the position she covets on this side of the ocean. *We should prepare now for the situation which would thus be created.*

" Austin M. Knight."

No action was taken on this letter by the Secretary. The battleships were not recalled for many months, nor were any other steps taken to get the Navy into better condition. Admiral Fiske said that when he returned to Washington in September, 1914, he found that

"nothing had been done toward preparedness, and that the Secretary's principal thought was the work that he was outlining for an Aide for Education, an office that he had just established. Naturally I was much concerned. The officers of the War College had been extremely exercised during August with the situation in Europe, and had concluded that the chances were in favour of Germany; and that if Germany succeeded in Europe, she would then attack the United States as the one bar between her and world dominion."

The Secretary of the Navy, however, was too busy planning kindergarten courses for sailors (that later proved a complete failure and were finally abandoned) to pay any attention to the world situation, to the possibility of war or to the military efficiency of the Navy.

VIII

During September and October, 1914, Admiral Fiske took occasion almost daily to urge upon Secretary Daniels the necessity of getting the fleet into war condition; of increasing the personnel of the Navy by 20,000 so that there would be at least men enough to provide "peace complements" for the vessels on the active list of the Navy; and of establishing in the Department a naval staff to prepare war plans and conduct naval operations. Mr. Daniels listened to Admiral Fiske and was "bored," but refused to take any action or to approve preparedness measures, or to permit the officers of the Navy to give information, even to Congressmen, of the lamentable condition of the Navy.

The Secretary had at hand a pliant friend in Rear Admiral

Victor Blue, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. Daniels was also greatly influenced by his Aide for Matériel, an officer of German name and antecedents. Both this officer and Blue opposed Fiske; and the Secretary was thus able to evade responsibility by placing the onus on them, and by getting them to make unsound recommendations to cover his own actions.

In view of this situation Admiral Fiske

"concluded that it was my urgent duty to make the Secretary see the truth, no matter what effect it might have on my professional future. . . . As Aide for Operations, I was most concerned with the impossibility of getting the Navy ready in time, in case we got into the war, because mainly of the lack of a sufficient personnel and the absence of any staff, or planning division."

Admiral Fiske therefore drew up in definite form the warnings and recommendations he had made verbally dozens of times without having any effect. He took this himself to Mr. Daniels, on November 5, 1914, read it to him, and enlarged upon each point. While Admiral Fiske was reading the letter to the Secretary, his Aide, Lieutenant Commander Cronan, entered the office and so witnessed the scene. After he had finished reading the Secretary gave the letter back without comment. On coming out of the office, Fiske told his Aides what had happened. "I said, 'I will speak to him again about it,' and I put it on my desk; but I thought about it later, and then thought 'Well, there is no use in doing that. It will not do any good.' So I simply filed it. The fact of that letter was known to a good many officers." A copy was given to the Assistant Secretary, F. D. Roosevelt, who assured Admiral Fiske, on November 10, 1914, that he agreed absolutely with it, that it was "bully" and that he would do what he could to secure action. Needless to say, Mr. Roosevelt never did anything at all in the matter.

This letter, which was dated November 9, 1914, when finally filed, is quoted in part below:

"NAVY DEPARTMENT,
"Washington, November 9, 1914.

"From: Aide for Operations.
"To: Secretary of the Navy.
"Subject: The Navy's unpreparedness for war.

"1. I beg leave, respectfully but urgently, to request the attention of the Secretary to the fact that the United States Navy is unprepared for war.

. . . . . .

"5. The present condition all over the world is one of general upheaval. The state of unstable equilibrium which the great powers maintained for many years with great skill and care has been at last upset. A conflict is going on, very few results of which can be foretold. One thing probably can be foretold, however. I mean that it can be foretold that the conflict will be violent and also will be long, involving other countries than those now taking part, and followed, even after the war at present outlined has been ended, by a series of more or less violent readjustments of boundaries, insular possessions, treaties, and agreements of every kind.

"6. Surely he would be an optimist who would expect that a state of general peace will come in less than five years. During the next five years we must expect a great number of causes of disagreement between this country and other countries, and periods of tension between this Government and others; periods like that preceding the Spanish War, needing only a casualty like the blowing up of the *Maine* to precipitate a conflict.

"7. In my opinion, as your professional adviser, and in the opinion of every naval officer with whom I have talked, the United States is in danger of being drawn into war and will continue to be in danger for several years. And when I say war, I do not mean war of the kind that we had with Spain, but war with a great power, carried on in the same ruthless spirit and in the same wholesale manner as that which pervades the fighting in

Europe now. It is true that I can not specify the country with which war is most probable, nor the time, nor the cause. But my studies of wars in the past, and my observations of conditions at the present time, convince me that if this country avoids war during the next five years, it will be accomplished only by a happy combination of high diplomatic skill and rare good fortune.

. . . . . .

"9. Comparing our Navy with the navies which we may have to meet in war, I find that our Navy is unprepared in three ways:

"10. First, it has an insufficient number of officers and enlisted men. The number of officers can not be increased — that is, the number of suitable officers — because it takes four years to get a midshipman through the academy and several years afterwards to train him. But the number of enlisted can be increased, and very quickly. . . . the fact remains that we want enlisted men right now. To man the ships which should be used in war we need 19,600 more men.

"11. The second way in which I find our Navy unprepared is in departmental organization. Our ships are well organized and pretty well drilled; the fleets are well organized, though not very well drilled; but the department itself is neither organized nor drilled in a military way. Perhaps this is nobody's fault, and may be attributed to the fact that our Navy has never had to fight a serious enemy — certainly not in 100 years. The people of the country have naturally devoted their energy along the paths of most obvious profit, and have not been confronted with any obvious military dangers. But in my opinion there is an obvious military danger at present, and the Navy Department should be organized to meet it. The organization which other navies and all armies of great powers employ to meet this danger is known, in English, by the phrase 'general staff.' In different languages, of course, the words are different, but the meaning is the same. In Great Britain it is called the 'Board of Admiralty.' This general staff has as its first duty preparation for war, and as its second duty the conduct of war when war comes. In making preparation for war, the general staff makes war plans. These war plans are of two kinds — general and specific. The general plans are simply analyses of what should be the general conduct

of the Navy in case of war; and the specific plans are plans in which the general plans are worked out in detail. Besides these general and specific plans, however, the general staff devises means whereby information regarding these general and specific plans shall be given to the various executive bureaus and divisions, corrected up to date, and whereby the various executive bureaus and divisions shall always be compelled to be ready to carry the various parts of those plans into immediate effect.

. . . . . .

"13. Our Navy Department has no machinery for doing what a general staff does. The closest approach to it is the General Board, which, as part of its numerous duties, 'shall devise measures and plans for the effective preparation and maintenance of the fleet for war,' and 'shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of the Navy plans of campaign,' etc. The General Board does carry out these duties but the plans that it makes are general and elementary. It exists entirely as an advisory board to the Secretary of the Navy. It is highly valuable; but, as its name indicates, it is only a 'general board.' It does hardly 1 per cent of the duties that a general staff would do. Having no executive authority and no responsibility, and being called upon to do a great variety of work, it has not the time to prepare specific plans, and has no means to see that even its general plans are ever carried out. If we compare our General Board with the general staff of any other country or with the Admiralty of Great Britain and when we see what those general staffs have been accomplishing during the past three months, we must become convinced that unless we go on the theory that we shall always have peace we shall be whipped if we ever are brought into war with any one of the great naval powers of Europe or Asia. We shall be like the lawyer who has not prepared his case when pitted against the lawyer who has prepared his case. We shall be as the French were before the Germans in 1870.

. . . . . .

"15. The third way in which I find our Navy deficient is in training. This deficiency in training is due not to lack of spirit or ability but to a combination of the two preceding causes; that is, to insufficient personnel and lack of departmental organization

to which must be added lack of small ships. I mean that, because we have had not enough small ships to do work on the coasts of Haiti, San Domingo, and Mexico, because our ships have been insufficiently manned and because the Navy Department has had no general staff which would devise and carry out a progressive system of training, lack of progressive training has resulted. . . .

" 16. The subject of the improper organization of our Navy Department was exhaustively analyzed by the Moody Board and afterwards by the Swift Board in 1909. Certain recommendations were made to remedy the evils that they found. These recommendations have not been carried out. They were, in effect, to establish a general staff, though the words ' general staff ' were not used. *In my opinion, the failure to adopt those recommendations was serious and will invite disaster if a great war comes.*

" B. A. Fiske."

IX

In order to complete the story of the General Board's letter of August 1, 1914, and Admiral Fiske's letter of November 9, 1914, and to relate the incidents of April, 1916, the chronological sequence will be disregarded for a moment.

As a result of the splendid efforts of the Navy League, and of many other patriotic influences, the country was roused, after the *Lusitania* was sunk, from the narcotic slumber into which the Administration had lulled it. The hearings of the House Naval Committee in the spring of 1916, made public the facts about naval unpreparedness. Admiral Fiske's courageous fight for naval efficiency was noted and approved by the country.

Mr. Daniels appeared before the House Naval Committee on April 3, 1916, and in the course of his statement made a scurrilous and violent personal attack on Admiral Fiske. This attracted wide attention, especially as the Secretary denied much of Admiral Fiske's testimony, and perverted and misrepresented many of that officer's activities in order to make a case against him in the press.

Admiral Fiske wrote to the Chairman of the House Committee on April 5, 1916, calling attention to some of the misstatements of Mr. Daniels. This letter was also widely published.

At the Navy League meetings on April 11th and 12th Admiral Fiske's actions were strongly endorsed. Colonel R. M. Thompson eloquently denounced the Secretary's methods. The issue of preparedness was presented squarely to the country.

On April 12, 1916, the United States Senate passed a resolution calling upon the Secretary of the Navy for

"(1) A communication, dated August 3, 1914, from the General Board of the Navy, warning the Navy Department of the necessity of bringing the Navy to a state of preparedness.

"(2) A communication dated November 9, 1914, from Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, senior adviser to the Secretary, warning the Navy Department of the unprepared state of the Navy."

On April 21, 1916, Secretary Daniels replied officially to this request in a letter which contained at least two false statements.

X

In speaking of the letter of Admiral Fiske, the Secretary stated that

"the chief clerk was unable to find it in his files. it having been withdrawn by an officer who 'looked it up several times but could not find it.' However, the copy herewith transmitted was furnished the Department by Admiral Fiske at my request.

"This communication was not furnished me, and I did not know of its existence until long after it was written. I find upon inquiry that it was filed with the chief clerk without my knowledge that it had been written. . . . I was greatly surprised when I learned that a communication deemed important enough now to be the subject of a Senate resolution was not considered by its author of sufficient importance for him to present in person to me

instead of depositing it, without acquainting me of his action, in the files of the Navy Department."

This statement is of the sort that Theodore Roosevelt would have characterized as a "deliberate and malicious lie." The circumstances under which the letter was presented to Mr. Daniels personally by Admiral Fiske, have been explained.

On April 29, 1916, Admiral Fiske wrote the President of the Senate in defence of his reputation. The statement in the Secretary's letter charged him with an act that "constituted a grave breach of official propriety — in fact of actual underhandedness — of an attempt to conceal an important letter from the Secretary." Admiral Fiske reviewed the circumstances under which the letter was presented to Mr. Daniels and quoted entries in his diary on November 5 and 10, 1914, to show that the Secretary had been fully cognizant of the letter.

On May 4th, 1916, Senator Tillman read Admiral Fiske's letter to the Senate, declaring it to be due to "wounded vanity" and "disappointed ambition." Senator Lodge warmly defended the action of Admiral Fiske. Nor did the matter rest there. On May 15, 1916, the American Defence Society addressed an open letter to the President calling attention to the "issue of veracity" raised by Secretary Daniels' statements, and urging that in justice to Admiral Fiske the matter be investigated. On May 22, 1916, President Wilson, in reply, quoted a memorandum he had received from Secretary Daniels. In this occurred the following passages:

"In a recent letter to the Senate, Rear Admiral Fiske stated that my statement showed a 'lapse of memory'; because he had presented the letter to me and I had read it. I have no recollection that this paper was ever presented to me, or of reading it.

"Inasmuch, however, as Admiral Fiske states that he did show it to me before it was filed, I of course accept his statement. It

was his custom while Aide for Operations to present to me scores of papers bearing upon all naval matters. It is utterly impossible for any Cabinet officer in the multiplicity of papers presented to him to recall all of them.

"I had talked with Rear Admiral Fiske several times about the subject matter of the communication, upon which I had rather fixed views. But I did not, when my letter was written to the Senate, and do not now recall that he had at any time committed his views to paper, presented them to me or placed them on file."

President Wilson said that in view of this statement "the matter does not seem to me to call for any comment."

It is a curious fact that a man, with a memory as retentive of details as that of Josephus Daniels, should be able to forget so conveniently a letter from his chief naval adviser warning him of the Navy's total unpreparedness for war!

XI

In the case of the first communication called for by the Senate, that is, the General Board's letter of August 1, 1914, the Secretary's choice of statements was even more unfortunate.

The Secretary wrote:

"We are unable to find any communication, such as that described in the resolution, from the General Board under date of August 3, 1914, though our files contained a letter of two days previous *not bearing upon the subject mentioned in your resolution.*"

Admiral Dewey sent the Secretary a copy of this letter of August 1, 1914, on April 18, 1916, in reply to a request from that official. In transmitting it, Admiral Dewey wrote:

"You will note that this is a confidential communication. and as it bears intimately upon our policy with regard to certain foreign powers I do not think it advisable that it should be given to the public."

Secretary Daniels was not content with this reason for withholding the letter from publicity. In fact, the matters affecting foreign powers, dwelt upon in the General Board letter, were the same as those contained in Admiral Fiske's letter of November 9, 1914. As far as the confidential character of the information was concerned, therefore, there was no reason for withholding one, when the other was transmitted to the Senate. Mr. Daniels in his letter to the Senate declined to transmit the General Board letter for another reason. He said:

" In view of the statement of Admiral Dewey, *and of the fact that the letter of August 1, 1914, does not refer to the necessity of bringing the Navy to a state of preparedness,* as stated in the resolution adopted by your body, it does not appear to be in the public interest to transmit the confidential communication of the General Board of August 1, 1914."

In spite of Secretary Daniels' statement, a glance at the parts of this letter quoted above will show that it dealt exclusively " with the necessity of bringing the Navy to a state of preparedness." The opening paragraph stated:

" In view of the immediate danger of a great war in Europe. . . . *The General Board earnestly urges that the battleships be brought home, docked and put in perfect readiness.* . . ."

Then, after reviewing the possible complications which might draw the United States into the war, the General Board ended its letter with the following sentence:

" We should prepare now for the situation which would thus be created."

XII

On Tuesday, May 25, 1920, Chairman Hale confronted the Secretary with the documents above quoted. After a moment of panic, Mr. Daniels set his jaw and with shameless effrontery attempted to squirm out of the corner.

Senator Hale, after reading the documents, asked Mr. Daniels:

"Now Mr. Secretary, will you please reconcile the statement, in your letter of April 21, 1916, to the United States Senate, with the purport of the letter of the General Board to you, which I have just read?

"*Secretary Daniels:* This letter that you have just read stated — and it was not — I thought you were referring to the report of the General Board which would come to me in the regular way. This seems a report from Newport, which is not the report of the General Board, with regard to the building program or other strengthening of the Navy. It seems that that report deals with conditions in Europe," etc., etc.

Mr. Daniels went on to describe how Americans were helped from Europe in 1914 and how money was sent them on the U.S.S. *Tennessee*. It was with great difficulty that the Chairman punctured his web of evasions and brought him back to the question, "How can you reconcile these statements?"

The Secretary then caught at another phrase "withdrawal of battleships from Mexican waters," and went into another verbose disquisition in which he said that it was none of Admiral Fiske's business where the battleships were kept. Fiske, he said, had repeatedly urged that they be brought back from Mexico. They were there "by direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. It was not the business of Admiral Fiske or Admiral Knight or the General Board to tell the President of the United States when he should take ships away from Mexico."

Again the Chairman recalled Mr. Daniels' attention to the question. Not being able to dodge any longer, the Secretary asked to see the letter and then said: "I do not recall Admiral Knight's letter, Mr. Chairman. . . ."

"*The Chairman:* Yes, but you recalled it when you wrote this letter of . . .

Secretary Daniels: . . . April 21, yes. The letter speaks for itself. I cannot recall the facts but the letter speaks for itself. . . ."

Again the Chairman asked: "How do you reconcile that?"

"*Secretary Daniels:* I do not recall, Mr. Chairman. I do not recall this letter from Admiral Knight (of August 1, 1914).

"*The Chairman:* But you said in your letter that the letter did not bear upon the subject mentioned in the resolution. On looking the letter over, do you not think it bore on the subject of the resolution?"

Still Mr. Daniels refused to answer and in desperation quoted Admiral Dewey's statement that the letter was confidential.

"*The Chairman:* Now you think, therefore, that you were justified in telling the Senate that this letter . . . did not bear upon the subject mentioned in the resolution? . . . If Congress asks of you a communication, a specific communication bearing upon a specific matter, and you have that communication and know that it bears upon that specific matter . . . you feel you would be justified in telling them that it does not bear upon that matter and is merely a confidential communication?

"*Secretary Daniels:* I say to you that it did not bear upon that matter primarily . . . and Admiral Dewey said it was confidential.

"*The Chairman:* Could you not have told Congress it was a confidential letter and therefore not to be sent to them? Did you have to tell them it did not touch on the matter connected with the resolution?

"*Secretary Daniels:* I do not think, sir, that this letter can be said, in its primary import, to bear upon it (naval preparedness)."

The Secretary then wandered off onto another diversion, saying that he resented the action of Admiral Fiske and

the General Board in venturing to write a letter making suggestions to him about policy.

The colloquy ended with the following passage:

"*The Chairman:* Then you have no further explanation to give of your letter?

"*Secretary Daniels:* I have given you a full explanation. That is all I have to say."

And there the matter rested!

This incident has been dwelt upon simply because it is a proved case of the kind of deliberate evasion and misrepresentation which was so characteristic a feature of Mr. Daniels' methods during the whole period of his administration.

XIII

Admiral Fiske, after discussing the fate that the General Board letter of August 1, 1914, and his own letter of November 9, 1914, met at the hands of Mr. Daniels, referred also to the action of the Secretary in the case of the annual report of the General Board for 1914. Early in November, 1914, the General Board, in outlining the policy that should be followed with regard to manning the vessels of the navy, had urged that Congress be asked to increase the personnel of the Navy by a minimum of 19,600 men. This addition the General Board considered absolutely necessary to keep the Navy manned on a peace basis. The Secretary insisted that the General Board eliminate this from its report, and refused to permit the report to be published until this had been done. The full details of this incident have been given in the account of Captain Taussig's testimony. Admiral Fiske fully confirmed the evidence of Captain Taussig and gave further details. The Secretary not only suppressed this recommendation, but even reported to Congress that no more men were needed.

As a result of this one act, the Navy entered the war

dangerously short of men in April, 1917. In fact, Rear Admiral Thomas Washington, Secretary Daniels' latest Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, told the House Naval Committee in January, 1920, that "I think the lack of preparedness which the country showed at the beginning of the war ought to prevent us from even thinking of dropping back to that point again (i. e., attempting to run the Navy in peace time with less men than are absolutely essential to war needs) . . . we do not want to get back to that same condition of almost helplessness we then (in April, 1917) found ourselves in."

This testimony at least cannot be suspected of being prompted by hostility to Mr. Daniels or by any "grievance." Mr. Daniels has attempted to explain away the unpreparedness of the Navy in 1917 by representing it as a myth concocted by the disappointed ambition and wounded pride of his naval critics. But the facts cited by his critics are admitted by every naval officer who was in a position to know anything about them, as in the case of this statement by Rear Admiral Washington.

XIV

Admiral Fiske also described the means by which the Office of Naval Operations was established in 1915.

The Secretary would not recommend any change from the inefficient organization then existing, lest his personal prerogatives might be interfered with. Indeed Mr. Daniels had discarded even the "Aide System" established by Secretary Meyer. Mr. Daniels himself has said that he found the Navy Department "encumbered" with aides and so did away with them.

Congress, however, was taking a keen interest in the efficiency of the Navy at this time. The long years of work of the Navy League were bearing fruit.

Admiral Fiske therefore resolved to put the matter before the House Naval Committee, regardless of the fate which he knew would be meted out to him by Mr. Daniels for daring to tell the truth.

In his testimony before the Senate Committee in 1920, Admiral Fiske briefly summarized the incidents of 1914–1915.

"Realizing that the safety of the country was at stake, I suggested to Representative Hobson that he get me called before the House Naval Committee, as the official expert of the Navy Department in strategy, which includes, of course, preparedness. Hobson did so.

"In the course of my testimony, I showed how wholly unprepared the Navy was, and, I believe, convinced the Naval Committee in a very great measure. In my testimony, I gave certain figures showing the composition and manœuvres of the German fleet in the autumn of 1913, in which dirigibles, aeroplanes, mine sweepers, and battle cruisers operated in the fleet, and the fleet manœuvred according to strategic plans drawn up by the general staff; and I declared that it would take 'at least five years' to get our Navy ready to fight effectively against such a navy. Our Navy is not yet able to carry on manœuvres such as the German Navy carried on in 1913.

"During the following month of January, 1915, I induced Representative Hobson to get the House Naval Committee to incorporate in the appropriation bill a provision for a Chief of Naval Operations, who should be given the authority and the staff necessary for preparing war plans and for putting the Navy in a state of preparedness, and be held responsible that those things were done. I drew up the phraseology myself with Hobson's assistance. The committee adopted the provision exactly as I had drawn it up, with two or three unimportant changes in words, and incorporated it in the bill."

Mr. Daniels had been furious on learning of the action of the House Committee. He even declared to Mr. Hobson that if the Office of Naval Operations was created he would pack up and go home.

The provision was struck out of the naval appropriation bill on a point of order raised by Congressman Mann of Illinois. It was restored in the Senate, but with modifications suggested by the Secretary.

In commenting on these modifications, Admiral Fiske said:

"It will be noted that although this provision as finally passed was a tremendous boon to the Navy, yet that it omitted to supply the Chief of Naval Operations with any staff for preparing war plans. It charged him with the preparation and readiness of plans, but provided no officers for making the plans. It is true that the Secretary of the Navy could, if he so desired, order officers to Washington but I had sought to make this mandatory, because I realized that, if it were not done, officers would probably not be ordered."

Mr. Daniels, in spite of his opposition to the creation of the Office of Naval Operations, later attempted to take the credit for its organization. In his annual report for 1915, he wrote in characteristic vein:

"Operations — Better Organization Effected

"*Upon my recommendation* the naval appropriation act of 1914 provided that 'there shall be a Chief of Naval Operations . . . who shall, under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy, be charged with the operations of the fleet and with the preparation and readiness of plans for its use in war.'"

It is the virtually unanimous opinion of naval officers that this was the most important piece of naval legislation since the Civil War. Without it our situation in 1917 would have been indescribably chaotic. The office of operations, emasculated though it was by Mr. Daniels' opposition, still provided the nucleus of a war organization. It was established in 1915 against the opposition of the Secretary, only because the educative influence of the Navy League had convinced Congress of the necessity of better organization, and

because Admiral Fiske took the initiative at the cost of his own career.

XV

In the early part of 1915 the situation had become such that Admiral Fiske felt he could no longer be of service in the Department. The Secretary refused to take any steps toward preparedness or to listen longer to his recommendations. He therefore decided to resign in the belief that another officer might have a greater influence on the Secretary's policy. Admiral Fiske said that:

"The reason why I was not in harmony with the Department was that I insisted on the signing of the administrative plan and the establishment of some system like that embodied later in the Office of Naval Operations. Yet both of these measures the Secretary approved of highly later; and it was by means of them that the Navy was handled with whatever of success it did attain in preparing for the war, and afterwards in waging it."

Admiral Fiske has paid dearly for his loyalty to the naval service and to the country. For five years he has had to endure in silence the false accusations and malicious insinuations of Josephus Daniels. He has been publicly condemned by the Secretary as a "colossal failure," as "an obstacle for Operations," as a "monumental egotist," as a militaristic "disciple of Von Tirpitz," a "Prussian," etc., etc.

It may be useful to give one characteristic illustration of the methods by which Daniels hounded the conscientious naval officers out of responsible positions and enforced a sickening sycophancy as the chief quality required of officers appointed to high positions in the Navy during his régime.

In the course of his testimony before the House Naval Committee on April 3, 1916, Secretary Daniels said:

"I do not recollect the date, Mr. Chairman, but some time after Congress had created the Office of Naval Operations, Admiral Dewey said to me one day that he would like to have Ad-

miral Fiske go on the General Board when he was relieved from Operations. I told him I would consider it. . . . Later Admiral Dewey requested me not to put Admiral Fiske on the General Board. He said he wanted a practical man; that Fiske was too theoretical."

The last statement was an absolute invention of Mr. Daniels. Admiral Dewey repeatedly denied ever having made any such statement. Admiral Fiske himself went to see Admiral Dewey about it. As soon as Fiske entered Dewey's office the latter " jumped out of his chair and came forward and said:

" ' Fiske, I never said it; I never said it. No communication passed between me and the Secretary about you being on the General Board except when you were present, and you heard me ask him to keep you on the Board.' "

Admiral Dewey's aide, Lieutenant Commander (now Commander) David D. LeBreton, was present in the room at the time.

Secretary Daniels' statements were widely circulated by the press. As a result, said Admiral Fiske,

" I lost my position and was officially discredited. I was put in the position of a man who had gotten to the highest position in the Navy and did not make good and had to be fired."

Thus did Secretary Daniels reward the officer who, at the cost of his position, the highest command in the Navy, had fought so valiantly for preparedness, and had secured for the Navy, the organization (in the office of operations) without which the Navy would have been wholly ineffective throughout the war; and Mr. Daniels wholly disgraced.

Fiske saved Daniels!

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAUSES OF DEPARTMENTAL INEFFICIENCY

(Admiral Fullam's Testimony)

I

REAR ADMIRAL W. F. FULLAM, retired, gave testimony on April 1, 1920, fully substantiating the points brought out by Admiral Fiske and the previous witnesses. Admiral Fullam had been the Secretary of the Moody-Mahan Commission which had recommended in 1909 a reorganization of the Department so that the Navy could be made efficient and could fight successfully in war. He was therefore unusually familiar with the problems of naval administration.

From 1913 to February, 1914, Admiral Fullam had been, as Aide for Personnel, very closely in touch with the administration of the Navy Department and with Secretary Daniels. In 1915, he was ordered to command the Pacific reserve fleet, and remained in this command until 1919. The Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet was sent to the South Atlantic in April, 1917, to patrol duty, and Admiral Fullam then became the senior officer in the Pacific, in charge of co-ordinating our naval activities in the Pacific, with those of the Japanese and English naval forces.

Admiral Fullam's testimony and the official documents he introduced reveal the story of his struggle to get the forces in the Pacific into efficient condition for war, not only from 1915 to 1917, but even after we entered the war. For a year he was unable to get any action from the Department,

although none of the vessels under his command were in an efficient material condition, or had personnel to man them.

By Herculean efforts and after long delays, Admiral Fullam was able finally to get these ships in shape and they were able to render effective service in the war. In his efforts, however, far from being helped by the Department, he met discouragement, and convincing evidence of the lack of any intelligent direction or co-ordination of the military activities of the Navy Department.

Admiral Fullam did not believe, however, that the responsibility for this condition could be laid upon the naval officers in the Department. He said, with regard to them:

"I wish to testify to the high character, zeal and ability of all of these officers and to the belief that every one of them wished to prepare the Navy for war and did their best to that end. But their hands were tied — they were helpless, for the simple reason that it was not the policy of the Navy Department to prepare actively, or even encourage preparations for war during the years between 1913 and March, 1917. As a result of this policy of indifference the Navy was not ready for war in any respect — organization, material or personnel. This was not the fault of naval officers or chiefs of bureaus. They all did their duty.

"The United States escaped disaster, as usual, in spite of its unpreparedness, simply because the German and Austrian fleets were both bottled up, with the exception of submarines, before we entered the war, and because all maritime nations joined the Allies instead of aligning themselves with the Central Powers."

II

When Fullam took command of the eleven cruisers and other vessels of the Pacific reserve fleet, in October, 1915, "these vessels . . . were at stations with complements of officers and men so small that they could not move."

These vessels were essential to the fleet, for they formed

the only available scouting units. Without them the fleet would have met the enemy blindfolded.

"This weakness was most serious and the condition was aggravated by the fact that the Navy had a very small, and wholly inadequate, air service available for scouting duty, owing to the failure of the Navy Department (i. e., Secretary Daniels) to supply such a force even after the vital importance of the subject had been brought to the attention of the Secretary and earnestly emphasized by Admiral Fiske in my presence in 1913, when I was on duty as one of the Aides to the Secretary of the Navy.

"In view of this situation, it was manifestly my paramount duty to get the reserve ships away from the docks and make them ready for the important work that would inevitably be forced upon them. I had no orders or instructions to do this, but I did it of my own accord."

Repeatedly, for nearly a year, Admiral Fullam gave the Department full and detailed reports of the hopeless condition of these reserve vessels, but, as he told the Senate committee:

"It is, perhaps, needless to say that no action whatever was taken by the Navy Department. Not one of the suggestions made in my letters was favorably considered. The Navy Department did practically nothing. It did not lift a finger nor initiate any measure to carry out its own policy (of keeping reserve ships in fit condition) as outlined in its letter of February 10, 1916, . . . Operations and Personnel (i. e., the Bureau of Navigation under Admiral Blue) did not or could not cooperate."

III

Mr. Daniels' deliberate suppression of the personnel needs of the Navy in 1914, had left the service so shorthanded that no vessel of the Navy had a full crew. The reserve vessels had not enough men even to go to sea. Admiral Fullam said:

"To my personal knowledge the Navy Department did nothing but carry on a routine — and a peace routine at that — at a time during 1916 and the first months of 1917 when war was practically inevitable. Not a move of any consequence was made to prepare the Navy for war. It is plain that naval officers who followed the same supine policy would have been guilty of criminal neglect of duty to the Navy and to the country. . . . It is pertinent to remark that if the Department had any plans at all they must have remained on paper. There was no evidence in the Pacific of any intent to prepare for war."

In a personal letter of June 12, 1916, to Admiral Benson, Admiral Fullam urged that steps be taken to put his ships in fit condition, as otherwise "as far as the Navy is concerned, on the Pacific coast, a condition of war would find things in a state of absolute pandemonium and inefficiency — unreadiness instead of preparedness in every essential that counts in actual warfare."

In his testimony, Fullam added the statement that "the condition mentioned in the last paragraph of this letter . . . was fully realized when war was finally declared in 1917."

IV

When Admiral Palmer became Chief of the Bureau of Navigation in August, 1916, things took a turn for the better. He set out vigorously to build up the personnel of the Navy. But he "found the Navy," said Fullam, "short of officers and men, with no adequate provision and no determined attempt of the Navy Department to supply the deficiency. . . . The hopelessness of the situation that confronted Admiral Palmer is shown by the fact that he could allow only four officers for each of my ships 'until the Department releases sufficient personnel by placing ships out of commission,' and he declared that no enlisted personnel 'could be made available for Fullam's vessels.' Admiral Palmer attempted to assist me . . . but he, too, found his

hands tied by the Department's policy of inaction along these lines."

On September 14, 1916, Admiral Fullam addressed a very strong letter to the Navy Department with regard to the condition of the Pacific reserve fleet. It so happened that the higher officials in the Navy Department were absent and Palmer, as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, was Acting Secretary. As a result, a satisfactory policy was established and a strong order sent to all bureaus and navy yards concerned, directing that this policy be carried out.

Commenting on this circumstance, Admiral Fullam said:

"This letter was prepared in the Department of Material of the Office of Operations and showed the efficiency of that office. . . . It was the one agent and the only agent that could co-ordinate all these bureaus and get anything done. . . . Under a proper organization this order should have been and doubtless would have been issued a year sooner. This letter conclusively proves that a directing, and ever present, controlling and co-ordinating military head is at all times essential to the efficiency and preparedness of a military service for war. If the Secretary will not or cannot co-ordinate all agencies, nothing may be done, unless he leaves the Department temporarily in charge of an officer vested with the Secretary's power over the bureaus — an officer who knows what should be done and who has the energy to do things — . . . With the signing by Admiral Palmer of the Department's letter of September 30, 1916, we had the first glimmer of a departmental policy concerning the preparation of the armoured cruisers for the war which we entered six months later. And it is only the truth to state that the Department would not have taken this action had it been left to its own initiative. It took this action only after eleven months of constant prodding and unceasing effort by the Commander and officers of the Pacific reserve fleet. That was September 30, 1916, six months before we entered the war.

". . . I wish to bear testimony to the very important action and to the efficiency of the division of material. Palmer did everything in his power to help. Their hands were tied through

no fault of theirs, as I believe the hands of every one of the officers in the Navy Department were tied, because the Navy Department had no policy and was not imbued with the absolute necessity of getting ready for war."

V

When we entered the war in April, 1917, of the six armoured cruisers in the Pacific fleet, only one, the flagship, was ready for battle or for war service. Admiral Fullam at that time warned Admiral Caperton, the Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific, of the unpreparedness of these vessels for action.

"The armoured cruisers of our Navy, officered and manned though they were with a personnel unequalled, in intelligence, patriotism and bravery by the men of any navy in the world, would nevertheless have been at such a fatal disadvantage, due to their lack of training, that a battle at this time with enemy vessels, manned with trained and seasoned crews, could only have resulted in inevitable defeat for our ships. To claim the contrary would be to exhibit a degree of ignorance and bombast of which any American citizen or naval officer should be ashamed. It was a condition of complete naval unpreparedness, as far as the scouts and screening vessels of the Navy were concerned."

Throughout the war the greatest difficulties were experienced in the Pacific, as a result of the strain caused by the necessity of preparing after war began, by the lack of any plans to guide effort and by the indecision and lack of policy of the Navy Department.

Admiral Fullam gave repeated cases of the chaos, confusion and delay for which these conditions were responsible. No guns nor torpedoes were available for the ships in the Pacific. As a result the submarines that were sent to the Atlantic had to leave for the war zone without guns or torpedoes. Target practice for recruits was forbidden on September 20, 1917, by order of Admiral Benson, because

of lack of ammunition. On September 11, 1918, the Bureau of Ordnance stated that guns would not be available for vessels in the Pacific until the spring of 1919.

In the matter of local defences and in co-operation with the Army in the Pacific, conditions were equally hopeless. After reviewing eight months' vain efforts to get proper co-ordination Admiral Fullam summarized in the following words his difficulties in this matter:

"In concluding this remarkable account of eight months' vain effort by the senior naval officer in the Pacific to secure an effective organization and proper co-ordination of Army and Navy forces, it is proper to summarize as follows:

"(1) The important recommendations made by the senior Army and naval officers on the Pacific coast were not approved by the Navy Department and were practically ignored for weeks.

"(2) The appearance of three whales, mistaken for submarines off San Diego, May 19, 1917, demonstrated the inadequacy of the Navy Department's organization, proved the lack of co-ordination of Army and Navy forces, and had more influence in bringing the Navy Department to act than the official report and recommendation of a rear admiral backed by the opinion of a brigadier general, made three months previously.

"(3 Army commandants in the Pacific at all times showed a desire to co-operate with the Navy and entered into the plan of joint boards with enthusiasm, as shown by the correspondence in the attached confidential file. The Navy Department objected to a closely knit organization in the Pacific, and insisted that conferences should be 'informal' rather than mandatory. This action practically forced the division commander to revoke or modify his orders and it decidedly lessened his authority or threw doubt upon it. The effect was most unfortunate.

"(4) The reliance of the Navy Department upon its regulations proved to be ill-considered. Regulations alone never have and never will secure efficiency in the administration of war afloat or ashore. There must be personal action and thoroughness of organization with definite orders as to the exact part that each unit is to play. Without such explicit orders, and without a care-

fully prepared plan the Army and Navy can never co-ordinate effectively and the safety of the United States in war will be jeopardized. An 'informal' organization, with the mere direction that Army and naval officers shall 'keep in close touch,' will not suffice. As well might we rely upon Naval Regulations alone to secure efficiency in our battle fleet.

"(5) The objection of the Navy Department to local joint boards of Army and naval officers was inexplicable. I have been informed, however, that the Navy Department did not favour any real joint organization with the Army for offensive and defensive purposes, and that the Navy Department discouraged, if it did not forbid, meetings of the joint board in Washington during the one or two years before the war. I am not personally cognizant of this fact, but it came to me from a reliable source, and if true, it would explain the department's action toward joint boards in the Pacific in 1917. It would appear, therefore, that the Navy Department, and not the War Department, objected to this means of securing proper co-ordination. That is a matter I wish to leave for somebody else to investigate. But I am informed that the importance of the joint Army and Navy board is now recognized, and it is to be hoped that it will play a very important rôle hereafter in providing a proper system of coast and harbour defence for this country.

"I was told that the Navy Department apparently was afraid that the Army and Navy joint board in Washington might meddle with questions of preparation for war, and therefore they did not want it to meet; and that the officers on it were afraid to push the matter, because they were afraid that the board would be abolished if they did meet. That, I say, is my information. I believe it, but I can not swear to it.

"The invulnerable principle must be recognized that there shall be organization — definite, authoritative, and complete — or there will be chaos. There is no alternative. The Navy Department did not itself perfect, nor permit anybody else to perfect, a thorough organization on the Pacific coast between February, 1917, and October, 1917. The appearance of three whales off San Diego made the need of a new organization very plain. The existing machinery did not work. There was no

head, no board of Army and Navy officers to control the situation, and there was no plan. Confusion was inevitable."

VI

During his service in the Navy Department, Admiral Fullam had closely followed the efforts made to develop a naval aviation service. He testified that practically nothing had been accomplished because of the failure or refusal of the Secretary to take the necessary action, or permit others to act.

In 1913, Admiral Fiske, in Fullam's presence, had called the attention of the Secretary to the increasingly great importance of aviation for naval purposes, and had explained what all other nations were doing. "Notwithstanding Admiral Fiske's efforts, which continued unremittingly until his retirement from the Navy Department in 1915, comparatively little had been accomplished in Aviation before the declaration of war, and, as a result of this failure to act during four years, we had only 45 trained aviators, and a pitifully inadequate service in July, 1917, three months after we entered the war."

In 1916, Captain M. L. Bristol, Director of Aeronautics, had his estimates cut from $13,000,000 to $2,000,000, and, though this was later increased to $3,500,000, this sum was altogether insufficient.

As a result of the failure to have developed naval aviation, no American built planes were used by the Navy in Europe until July, 1918, fifteen months after the war began. After war was declared, much was done, but with an expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars. Most of this was wasted — or could have been saved — had one per cent. of the war expenditures been used before 1917 in building up our naval aviation.

This unpreparedness in aviation was not due, in Admiral Fullam's opinion, to the officers and bureaus. "The respon-

sibility rested with the Secretary of the Navy, who cut the estimates and prevented the full development of this important element of naval warfare during the years preceding the declaration of war."

VII

The picture of Josephus Daniels functioning as Secretary of the Navy had already been sketched by previous witnesses. Admiral Fullam added many interesting features. Of Daniels' pacifism there was no doubt in his mind.

"I regret very much to say that Secretary Daniels did not take the same interest (as Secretary Meyer) in the preparation of the Navy for war. He was greatly interested in many things that were good, but generally they did not affect the preparation of the Navy for war or stimulate officers to exert themselves."

In 1913 when relations with a foreign power seemed strained Admiral Fullam as an Aide drew up a memorandum of things that should be done immediately. He did not take it to Mr. Daniels, as he knew from experience that as it related to war preparations, the Secretary would oppose any such recommendation from a naval officer. So Fullam took the memorandum to the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Roosevelt, who presented the recommendations to the Secretary. Fullam graphically described the occasion.

"I remember so well that he sat down in his chair and put this paper on the floor between his feet and read off from time to time the items; and, coming from him as a civilian. . . . some of those things were done."

One of the measures recommended was the preparation of a list of assignments of retired officers to active duty. This too was acted upon in a way characteristic of Daniels' naval administration.

"The Bureau of Navigation (under Rear Admiral Blue) was so rattled at getting a suggestion to really do something — I do

not hesitate to say so — that they assigned this duty . . . to a picked up board of three comparatively young officers. . . . They were unfamiliar with the personnel of the Navy; they did not know the names of these retired officers; nor of the officers on the active list who were practically incapacitated; and their recommendations were very amusing. They had a one-legged captain ordered to command a battleship. They had officers in an insane asylum . . . assigned to important duties. . . . The thing was impossible and had to be revoked."

Mr. Daniels always rather scorned the advice of naval officers. Said Admiral Fullam:

"He was one of the most agreeable men personally that I ever had anything to do with." . . . Yet "he did not want to give admirals much authority and I cannot tell you how it hurt us. He did not trust us. He did not take our advice and realize that we were citizens of the United States, just as he was, and that it was our life to do that thing and to help him to do it. . . . It was a very trying situation that naval officers were subjected to. We could support Mr. Meyer's policies with great enthusiasm, because they were directed toward the preparation of the Navy for war. It was not to him a political matter at all, . . . it was to prepare the Navy for war. How could I, the next day after Mr. Meyer left office, and I became Mr. Daniels' Aide, view with equal enthusiasm and zeal policies that destroyed and smashed everything that Mr. Meyer had attempted to do or did do? It is impossible, unless a naval officer can turn his coat in 24 hours and say one thing today and another thing tomorrow."

This, in Fullam's opinion, was one of the most distressing features of Mr. Daniels' administration. Mr. Daniels insisted on having his own way, and his own way was not for the good of the Navy. He would not tolerate officers around him who would not accept his way.

"That is going to ruin the Navy if you keep it up," Admiral Fullam told the committee. "If you establish the principle that a man has got to be subservient almost servile, almost to efface

himself and say yes and not dare to express himself, the inevitable result is that you put mediocrity itself upon a pedestal and you will throw ability and zeal into the discard and you will hurt the Navy if that system becomes imbedded in the Department. Officers must be assigned to duty not by reason of their subservience, but by reason of their ability and they must be ready to have any job and go to sea . . . when they find that it is planned to do something that will injure the Navy and not help prepare the Navy for war."

VIII

Admiral Fullam had been graduated at the head of the class at the Naval Academy and had been on duty several times at Annapolis. He had always been keenly interested in education in the Navy. As Aide for Personnel in 1913, he came into close contact with Mr. Daniels' ideas about education. These, to him, were merely another proof of the misguided political enthusiasm of the Secretary.

In the Navy, the instruction of enlisted men had been going on for many years. The problems had been carefully studied and a very effective system of technical training had been developed. All this Mr. Daniels ignored. He was going to make the Navy "the greatest university in America" whether the Navy liked it or not.

Admiral Fullam drew up a plan

"particularly emphasizing the professional spirit, in order that all men in the Navy might make themselves eligible for promotion. . . . I made academic instruction optional with each man, after he left the training station, except for men who were illiterate. But . . . the Secretary insisted that they should all be forced to go to school even those who had been to school, so that I think it did harm . . . and tended to drive men out. . . ."

In spite of his objections to Mr. Daniels' frills, Admiral Fullam had endeavoured to carry through the educational

plan for the good there was in it. But Mr. Daniels insisted on his hobbies.

"If he had not been so extreme . . . it would have worked. But it was so emphasized that the officers of the Navy had to look upon that as the principal duty of the Navy; and, therefore, it hurt the morale of the Navy, because the chief business of readiness for war was lost sight of."

The scheme was harmful and died. "The whole system is now a dead letter in the Navy."

IX

It was characteristic of Mr. Daniels, that he condemned the "aristocracy" of the Navy and set about "democratizing," by destroying its splendid traditions, by lowering the standards required of the naval officer and by levelling the distinction in ranks to the detriment of the discipline and morale of the Navy. Of this, too, Admiral Fullam spoke from experience when he said:

"About democratizing the Navy, I talked to the Secretary. I told him he was mistaken; that there was no aristocracy in the Navy . . . that officers loved their men. and were ten times more solicitous of their men than any employer in civil life is of his. . . . The men of the Navy, why, we stood together all our lives. . . .

"These charges of caste and aristocracy hurt the Navy. The officers felt hurt. . . . This caused resentment, enmity, permanent resentment, permanent enmity. It hurts the morale. No, sir, there is no caste. or aristocracy. There are traditions that were established by John Paul Jones and Decatur, perpetuated by Farragut and Porter and Sampson and Dewey and Mahan and Evans and Bronson and Schroeder and Wainwright, and men like that. If you call that caste or aristocracy, the more you have of it the better for the Navy and for this country; and when you wreck it, you will wreck the Navy, just as sure as there is a God in Heaven!"

X

To Admiral Fullam as to Admiral Fiske, there seemed a curious similarity between Daniels' régime in our Navy and the disastrous administration of the French Navy, some twenty years ago, by M. Camille Pelletan, a politician not unlike Josephus Daniels in his policies and views. A contemporary report of our Naval Intelligence, read by Admiral Fullam, gives the following account:

"Camille Pelletan's administration was disastrous to the Navy. And yet he was a patriot, animated by the best intentions. Unfortunately, almost all his ideas were contrary to a good organization of the Navy Department, where so many out-of-date and incomprehensible traditions survive. He left his department in chaotic disorder.

"The Navy is succumbing to a double anarchy — anarchy at the top, due to an out-of-date organization of the central services of the ministry, which has permitted politics to reduce in a few years all the services to a state of complete impotency and irresponsibility; anarchy from below, due equally to the intrusion of the political element into our dockyards, thanks to which intrusion the dockyards have ceased to be able to build and maintain the fleet.

"Speaking of Camille Pelletan as Minister of Marine of France in Les Marines Française et Allemande, 1904, the author states that the distinguishing characteristic of M. Pelletan's régime is 'an increased tendency to lessen the combatant corps, to lower its prestige, to belittle it in the minds of the enlisted men and the public.'

. . . . . .

"The name of democracy has been invoked to explain this merciless war on the spirit of discipline and duty; it was pretended that it was desired to make the Navy democratic. It is one of the most daring jokes that a minister has ever permitted himself to play. Between demoralization and democratization there is an abyss."

The French Navy was so wrecked by M. Pelletan and by the failure to permit naval officers to say anything about the navy that it has not yet recovered.

It was obviously Admiral Fullam's fear that the Daniels régime might have a similarly disastrous sequel, particularly as the Secretary has always "smothered and throttled" naval officers. In January, 1916, for example, Mr. Daniels summoned Admiral Fiske and forbade him to write or speak or even talk in private about the Navy "even to say that two and two make four." So, too, in 1915, the Secretary had asked Admirals Fullam and Knight to attend a society dinner in New York city as representatives of the Navy, and to speak if they wished it. Admiral Knight, then President of the Naval War College, prepared a paper dealing with naval organization and administration which Fullam thought "one of the finest things I ever heard. It was just in line with Admiral Mahan's work . . . about the organization of the Navy Department and the control of the Navy to make it fit for battle." The Secretary was intensely annoyed and severely reprimanded Admiral Knight. He also demanded Admiral Fullam's notes but as the latter's remarks were "more or less jocular," the Secretary returned them without comment.

"I felt that when officers of high rank, who have been forty years in the service are not permitted to speak at all about the service in which their whole life has been spent, and where their energies are concentrated, it is not democracy, sir, it is autocracy."

XI

The heart of the naval controversy, the summation of the issues at stake was clearly and forcibly restated by Admiral Fullam, in concluding his testimony.

"In concluding this statement regarding the preparedness of the Navy for war as regards both personnel and material, it is

only proper to state that the officers and men of the Navy were and always have been individually ready for war; that the unpreparedness of the Navy for war in 1917 was not primarily the fault of any officer or officers, but that it was due to the fact that the Navy Department as a whole declined or failed to adopt policies which demanded, or even permitted officers to prepare the Navy for its duty as a fighting machine.

"That the officers and men of the Navy, both regular and reserve, did their whole duty with great gallantry and devotion is admitted by everybody, and that they contributed loyally to the winning of the war is also beyond question. That the bureau chiefs were in no sense responsible for the lack of preparedness of the Navy Department and that they accomplished wonders as soon as their hands were free can not be denied.

"That we escaped disaster was plainly due to the fact that the enemy's fleet, with the exception of submarines, had been driven from the seas before we declared war against Germany. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that we had no naval war in the full sense of the word. No admiral led an American fleet into battle. Not one American ship fired a single gun at a German ship, and not a German ship fired a single gun at an American ship, with the exception of a few engagements between German submarines and our destroyers, armed merchant ships, and small craft, and noting the gallant little fight made by our subchasers at Durazzo. It was a war without naval battles.

"In other words, there was, strictly speaking, less sea fighting than in the war with Spain, and the Navy of the United States was not fully tested as to its readiness for battle nor as to the adequacy of all its units to meet the emergency of war had Germany's fleet been free to take the sea against us.

"Escaping as we did by our great good fortune, in that the German fleet never appeared after the battle of Jutland in June, 1916, it is the duty of every naval officer who realizes the actual condition of our unpreparedness to tell the truth upon the occasion of the investigation of the conduct of the war by a coordinate branch of the United States Government, in order that the people of this country may no longer be deceived and that

the United States may not again be threatened by the inexcusable failure of the Navy Department to prepare the fleet in all respects for sudden war at any time in the future. . . .

"But a naval officer's duty does not, or should not, begin and end in battle, nor in time of war. He has duties and responsibilities before the war and before the battles begin. And it should be clearly understood that any officer of the Navy who sits supinely or subserviently idle and indifferent when an armed enemy nation with an efficient fighting navy is in plain sight (and has been for years), and fails with energy to prepare and to urge others to prepare his country's navy for war, when he knows or should know that it is unprepared in every respect, is unworthy of his cloth; that he is neglecting his first duty, fails to measure up to the standards of the American Navy, and is deserving of a more severe punishment than a captain who fails to prepare a ship for battle. The neglect in time of peace to prepare the great Navy of a great nation for battle imperils the whole country, and for this reason the offence is the more reprehensible.

"The experience of the past demonstrates clearly, if we probe for the facts, that in throttling and ignoring officers of high rank who are seeking zealously and patriotically to prepare the Navy for war, the real truth concerning the Navy may be suppressed, the public may be deceived, and as an inevitable result the Navy may be placed in a condition of unreadiness involving danger of humiliating and disastrous defeat, or that it may fail to put forth its best efforts in affording 'all practicable relief and assistance to our allies' when engaged in war.

"The Navy of the United States was not properly prepared for war in April, 1917. The question is, Shall such a condition be permitted to exist again in the future?"

CHAPTER XIV

MR. DANIELS' ADMIRALS AND THEIR SMOKE SCREEN

(The Testimony of Admirals Rodman, Wilson, Niblack, Strauss and Fletcher)

I

INSPIRED announcements in the press, beginning as early as January, had indicated the method by which Secretary Daniels would attempt to defend his administration. From the first it was his obvious desire to escape responsibility by converting the naval investigation into a domestic feud within the service. He spared no effort to align his appointees to high positions against Admiral Sims. Hence his publication of Admiral Sims' personal letter advising against the appointment of Wilson to command the fleet. Hence, too, his playing up of Admiral Benson. If he could convert the affair into a Sims-Benson, or Sims-Operation "row" he could reasonably hope to escape unscathed.

Of course, there were difficulties in the way of such a course. The facts were so obviously as Sims had stated them that it would be impossible to meet the issues squarely. Naval officers, even of the Daniels camp, have still the habit of telling the truth, and if these officers — however friendly to himself, or hostile to Sims they might be — who really knew intimately the activities of the Department before and during the war, were put on the witness stand they would probably make damaging admissions by telling the truth.

So the Secretary was faced with the problem of mapping out his case in such a way that he could make the maximum use of those officers whose assistance he could depend upon, in return for favours rendered or anticipated, while not running the risk of any very damaging admissions in the cross-questioning. The obvious way was to call officers of high rank and in high positions, who were indebted to him for their advancement, and yet who knew little or nothing of the issues of the investigation. That this was the course decided upon is evident from the testimony of the first five of his witnesses; Admirals Rodman and Wilson and Rear Admirals Niblack, Strauss and F. F. Fletcher.

Their testimony indicated clearly the method of defence. Even the Secretary must have realized that the facts of unpreparedness and inefficiency could not be disputed. Consequently, they were to be evaded, misstated, misrepresented, obscured and perverted. The criticisms of his administration could be presented to the public as " attacks " upon the Navy, as a " belittling " of its war record. The issues could be obscured by introducing vast masses of testimony, and emphatic statements of high officials, to demonstrate how splendidly the Navy performed its task in the war, especially in the later months of 1918. False constructions could be put upon disconcerting evidence, these misrepresentations could be used as targets, and the public might be led to believe, that in annihilating his own misrepresentations, he was meeting the criticisms of Admiral Sims and the other officers who had told the real story of his administration. What little favourable evidence was available could, by artful misstatement and half truth, be made to appear a complete defence. Finally, in order to distract the public attention from himself, violent denunciation could be heaped upon the critics, in the hope of persuading the public that in damning the witness, the facts he had sworn to could, in some mysterious way, be neglected.

II

In other words, if one may employ a naval term, Secretary Daniels used counter-barrage and smoke screen tactics. In order to make these effective he proposed to overwhelm his critics by weight of rank if not by evidence. At first he had announced his intention of calling all officers who held high positions in the Navy during the war. But when the cross-examination of his witnesses demonstrated the fact that the truth was going to be dragged out of the men he called, he hurriedly revised his list of witnesses.

The officers whom he finally did call can be divided into two chief groups. There were first the five officers already named, who knew very little of the Department's activities during the war, and nothing of the relations existing between the Department and Admiral Sims, and hence could not give much away. Some of these officers also had private grudges against Sims and could be counted on to even up scores when on the stand.

The second group was composed of the officers who had served in the more responsible positions in the Navy Department during the war. They felt resentment toward Sims because they believed, as they expressed it, that in aiming at Daniels, he had hit them. They failed to realize that Sims was not criticizing them personally for the departmental errors, but was rather condemning the departmental inefficiency, lack of organization and unpreparedness which made it inevitable that, in the stress of war, mistakes would result, no matter how ably or faithfully or persistently they struggled to overcome the handicaps imposed upon them by the Secretary's policy.

Nothing is more significant than Mr. Daniels' failure to call as witnesses in his behalf the group of officers of high rank in the Department who knew most intimately what the departmental policies and activities before and during the

war had been. Not a single Chief of Bureau was called by him. The obvious inference must be that they knew too much. They had not been subjected to any criticism by Admiral Sims. They had all laboured under enormous difficulties during the war, as a result of the lack of plans and definite policies. If called, these conditions would certainly have been admitted by them. Hence, they were not called. Instead, Mr. Daniels had each of them write a neat summary of the work successfully accomplished by them during the war, with enormous masses of statistics showing every projectile, every bolt, every ounce of powder or sugar produced. These Mr. Daniels introduced in his own testimony in lieu of running the risk of calling them as witnesses and of having questions asked them that would bring out further damaging confirmation of the unpreparedness and lack of plans before 1917, and the mistakes and delays in the first six months of the war.

III

Certain salient facts stand out very sharply after a careful review of the testimony of the witnesses called by Mr. Daniels. In the first place a comparison of the mere bulk of the evidence is interesting. In the printed volumes of the Hearings the testimony of Admiral Sims occupies 375 pages; that of the other eight witnesses called by the Committee on its own initiative 465 pages; that of the first group of six admirals called by the Secretary 358 pages; that of the three officers who served in the Office of Operations 883 pages; that of the Secretary himself 1,188 pages. The testimony of the first nine witnesses dealt almost exclusively with the issues raised by Admiral Sims' letter of January 7, 1920, which was the raison d'être of the investigation. Of the testimony introduced by Secretary Daniels' witnesses, only a very small percentage, certainly not more than 10 per cent., dealt specifically with these issues. In other words,

the defence was primarily a smoke-screen. Its purpose was to obscure the facts, not to elucidate them.

In the second place, each of the Daniels witnesses was intent on clearing his own skirts of any responsibility. They had few good words to say for Mr. Daniels. When they could, they kept resolutely off the subject of his methods and policies. In no case did they attempt any general endorsement or approval of them. But they did most earnestly endeavour to show how nobly they themselves had laboured during the war; how greatly their efforts had contributed to making the best of a bad situation.

In the third place, at least sixty per cent. of their testimony is devoted to a discussion of the undeniably magnificent work accomplished by the officers and men of the Navy during the war. No better or more lucid description of this can be found than is provided by Admiral Sims' own book "The Victory at Sea," originally published in the *World's Work*. Consequently it is hard to understand in what way this type of testimony contributed to a settlement of the questions under consideration. Of course the motive that inspired the testimony is clear. Admiral Sims was to be accused of attacking the Navy, in order to create an unfavourable public attitude toward him. He was to be condemned and his statements deprecated as injurious to the Navy. The Daniels men were to provide in this way an effective counter-barrage to facilitate the Secretary's escape.

In the fourth place, irrelevant issues were introduced to provide means for malicious and petty personal insinuations or vehement denunciation of Sims. It is a curious fact that the testimony of the eight other officers, reviewed in the preceding chapters, was hardly mentioned, nor were they assaulted, except by Mr. Daniels himself. The effort was to be concentrated against Sims. He had caught the public notice. The country had been greatly impressed by his clear statement of actual conditions. Consequently, fire and brim-

stone with sulphuric trimmings was to be his fate at the hands of Daniels and his hellions.

IV

It must be noted that in almost every instance the witnesses called by Mr. Daniels, when subjected to the patient but searching and astute cross-examination of Senator Hale, admitted that the Navy as a whole was unprepared for war in 1917; that no special steps had been taken to prepare for war until after April 6; that the Navy was short of men as a result of Mr. Daniels' own actions; that the Navy had no war plans applicable to the situation which we faced on entering the war; that for many months no definite plans nor policies were formulated; that our forces were held back from the war zone for months; and that Admiral Sims received little assistance in the early months of the war.

One has only to read the cross-examination of the officers called by the Secretary and it will be found that these witnesses admitted the accuracy of every essential criticism of the Daniels administration by Admiral Sims or other witnesses. The Secretary stands convicted by the words of his own defenders of having prevented preparedness; of having prevented an efficient organization of the Department; of having failed to help the Allies in the hours of their greatest need, immediately after we entered the war. In fact, Admiral Sims, in his rebuttal statement, quoted only from Mr. Daniels' witnesses in substantiating all of his criticisms, and he demonstrated from their admissions, willing or reluctant, that the Secretary, intentionally or otherwise, had deceived the country and misrepresented the state of the Navy before, during and after the war.

V

It will be unnecessary to linger long with the testimony of the first five admirals called by Daniels to start the laying of his smoke screen. Four of them, Rodman, Wilson, Niblack and Strauss, had been selected by the Secretary himself, without ever consulting Admiral Sims, for subordinate posts abroad, during the war. All four had received further preferment from Mr. Daniels after the armistice. Rodman and Wilson are now the commanders-in-chief of the two unhappily divided portions of our main fleet. Strauss, who had been a member of the General Board during 1919, was rewarded for his service to the Secretary by being appointed in December, 1920, to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, with the rank of Admiral. Niblack was made Director of Naval Intelligence and more recently naval attaché to Great Britain. In other words, all are recipients of Mr. Daniels' favours. All had obligations to him. At the same time none of them knew very much about anything. They were unfamiliar with the Department's activities before and during the war, and of the matters dealt with in Admiral Sims' letter and testimony. Hence they devoted themselves exclusively to the smoke screen tactics of the four varieties described above.

Admiral Fletcher, like Admiral Badger, whose testimony will be taken up a little later, had been commander-in-chief of the fleet during the Daniels régime. Both had, after retirement, been kept on active duty in pleasant billets in Washington as members of the General Board, drawing active pay and allowances of about $10,000 a year instead of the $6,000 retired pay. Mr. Daniels' good will has meant, therefore, $4,000 a year to them. These officers also belong to the group of reactionary die hards whose intellectual processes were frozen long before the dreadnaught era and eons before the era of aircraft and submarines. They con-

sequently consistently opposed progress, and hence Sims. For in the Navy, Sims and Progress are almost synonymous words.

VI

All of these officers freely admitted their ignorance of the relations between Admiral Sims and the Department and of the matters discussed by Admiral Sims in his letter and in his testimony.

Admiral Rodman, for example, said:

"I wish to reiterate that I have not one single document or record of any kind, class or description to substantiate my statement. . . . I am simply trying to lay before this committee my views, in general, of what the Navy accomplished."

He added that he put all his papers in the "Rodman file system," that is, the waste basket.

When questioned by Senator Hale, Admiral Rodman said he knew "very little" about the convoy system and "very little" about the sending of forces abroad.

When the chairman added with permissible sarcasm

"or about the state of affairs there or anything else?"

Rodman replied:

"No; I do not. I was not in the position to; except what I read in the public press I knew very little about it."

Rodman did not know exactly what Sims' authority or position abroad was. He was "not very familiar with the organization of the Navy Department." He did not know just how short the battleship crews were at the beginning of the war. He did not even remember the names of the battleships he had taken abroad in December, 1917.

Admiral Rodman's idea of contributing to the discussion was to remain conscientiously in ignorance of all facts that might be pertinent. He said in fact:

"I have studiously avoided attending the hearings before this committee, or of reading in detail the testimony which Admiral Sims or any one else has presented."

Similarly, Admiral Wilson, when asked if he knew of the Department's action on Admiral Sims' recommendations said: "Not a word do I know about it." Of Admiral Sims' testimony, he said also: "Not a word do I know about it." Of the Department's attitude toward the forces abroad, he knew "not a word of it. . . . My time was fully occupied in other ways."

Rear Admiral Niblack knew a great deal about his own services in the war, but as he explained, "I know little of my own knowledge of what it is claimed the Navy did not do."

Rear Admiral Strauss, likewise, had no knowledge of any part of the operations abroad save those of the Mine Force, nor did he know anything in detail about the Department's work during the war.

Even Rear Admiral F. F. Fletcher was too busy with his own work on the War Industries Board to know what, if anything, the Navy Department did.

"I was not very closely associated with the executive officers of the Navy Department charged with the duty of conducting the operations of the war. My views upon the questions involved will therefore be confined to that obtained from the viewpoint of a member of the General Board, but more particularly from the viewpoint of a member of the War Industries Board."

He admitted that he knew but little of the anti-submarine campaign, of the personnel and matériel conditions of the Navy in 1917, nor of the action of the Department in the early months of the war.

In view of the confessed ignorance of these officers on most of the questions at issue, their testimony need not be very seriously considered. Mere expressions of personal opinions

on subjects of which they knew nothing will hardly throw light on anything save the state of their own minds. That is hardly to be considered an edifying subject.

VII

All of these officers had much to say about preparedness. They vied with each other in describing the spotless efficiency of their illustrious chief, Josephus Daniels, and the magnificent condition of the fleet in 1917. Their ignorance of the facts must be considered as relieving them from any suspicion of deviating consciously from the truth! Otherwise, it would be hard to explain the contradiction between their several statements and the testimony of Admiral Mayo, the Commander-in-Chief, and other well informed officers, such as Admiral Grant, Admiral Fullam, Captain Pratt and Admiral Benson.

In considering their testimony about preparedness, there is one point that must be remembered constantly. When they speak of the preparedness of the Navy, or the fleet, they refer only to the twelve battleships, and twenty-two destroyers that were with Admiral Mayo in the spring of 1917. These were the only vessels in the Navy even approximately ready, as they all admitted. Yet in their testimony they so described the relative efficiency of this fraction of the Navy as to convey the impression that all the Navy was equally ready for war; which, of course, was absolutely untrue.

Admiral Rodman said for example:

"At the beginning of the war the Navy had so far profited from previous appropriations that I have no hesitancy in saying, from having been in the fleet, that never have I seen such efficiency and preparedness as obtained at that time."

This was the statement that the press headlined. Yet Rodman knew that his statement applied only to a few of

the battleships and destroyers. He should have known that these alone constitute neither a navy nor a fleet. He admitted this later.

Senator Hale after cautioning him that he was under oath to tell the truth asked the following question:

"Do you want it to be understood from your statement that you consider that the United States Navy was in a thorough state of preparedness at the beginning of the war?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir, not by any manner of means. . . . There were certain of our ships that were lacking. We lacked types of ships that we should have had and some of our ships were not, possibly, as well prepared as they might have been, but in general the *battleship fleet* was in a high state of efficiency."

Again Senator Hale asked:

"Do you mean that it (the fleet) was in a high state of efficiency as a fleet?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir; I would confine myself to saying that the battleship fleet was. Other types were not efficient."

Admiral Rodman admitted that our fleet was not prepared to meet the German fleet, as it was constituted in 1917, that it was short of men "I do not know how much; possibly ten to twenty per cent., something of that kind." He admitted also that the Navy was not "ready from stem to stern" in 1917, as alleged in the Secretary's report for 1918. None of Mr. Daniels' witnesses, in fact, could swallow this ridiculous assertion.

VIII

Admiral Wilson's testimony on preparedness was identical in substance with that of Rodman as may be judged from the following extracts from his testimony:

"I have no hesitation in saying that no nation upon the approach of war has ever had a force of battleships more nearly

prepared for battle than was the force to which I was attached and which spent the winter of 1916–1917 in southern waters; and I feel sure that if this force had engaged an enemy *on its cruise north in the spring of 1917, the victory would have been ours.*"

What Wilson really meant is indicated by the following questions:

"*The Chairman:* Do you mean that the fleet as a battle fleet was prepared?

"*Admiral Wilson:* No. I referred to the battleships. . . . That is what I know about and all I can speak of is what I know."

Fortunately, he knew nothing of the condition of the reserve battleships, of the cruisers, of the submarines, or of any other part of the Navy than the twelve battleships and 22 destroyers already mentioned as being the "fleet."

Admiral Wilson admitted that this fleet was "theoretically" not in any condition to meet a fleet like that of Germany in 1917, but said that nobody feared such a contingency, as the British fleet stood between us and the enemy. We relied upon it to protect us, said Wilson.

He tried heroically to explain the state of unpreparedness. "You know, we were not able to prepare anything to speak of, because a few months before we entered the war the majority of the people voted . . . that they approved our not having gone into the war, and we could not take any steps leading to war under such circumstances!"

Admirals Niblack, Strauss, Fletcher and Badger all declared the "fleet" was admirably prepared in April, 1917. Yet all were forced to admit that this "fleet" was one only in name, that the necessary scouting and screening vessels were lacking, and that our cruisers and most of our destroyers were not with the fleet, as they had too small crews to be of any immediate use.

From their testimony alone, it was proven that of all the

vessels in the Navy, only Admiral Mayo's force was approximately prepared in April, 1917. Even this force could have been annihilated by the German fleet, as it existed at that time. Of course we were quite safe, as several of the witnesses pointed out, because the British fleet would continue to protect us by the blockade of the German High Seas Fleet, as it had been doing for nearly three years. The Navy Department knew this. They had known for at least two years that we might enter the war, and that we would enter, if at all, on the side of the Allies. They knew, therefore, that the only part of the fleet even approximately ready for war was just that part which would not be required for any immediate effective co-operation with the Allies. The vessels that were needed — the cruisers, many of the destroyers, and all other light craft — were not ready. They had no crews, and were often in bad material condition.

The fact of the matter was, as Admirals Fletcher, Wilson, and Niblack clearly stated it, that our naval policy from 1914 to 1917 had ignored altogether the war in Europe, and the Navy had continued the ordinary routine of pre-war years.

Some of these witnesses attempted to justify this Josephan perversion of neutrality. They explained that our neutrality prevented us from doing anything beyond what we had always done. Mr. Daniels, so they admitted, would not permit the Navy to enter upon any unusual preparedness measures lest the Germans should be offended and suspect that some day we might cease to be supine and would, perhaps, even fight for our rights!

IX

Admiral Rodman's intention to help out Secretary Daniels was made perfectly clear. He explained indeed, that his only purpose was to defend the "Navy" from the attacks

of Admiral Sims, a remark that proves the truth of his own admission that he had read "not a word" of Admiral Sims' testimony. A few quotations will serve to show Admiral Rodman's attitude.

"I am here purely from a sense of duty to defend the good name of the Navy . . . for this purpose alone, without malice and with no ulterior motive. . . ."

"There is no question whatever in my mind but that our Navy did its full share most efficiently and splendidly in helping to bring the war against the Huns to a successful and victorious conclusion, and I am here solely, *as far as I know,* to defend its deservedly good name."

As this had never been attacked, one may wonder if Mr. Daniels did not know, better than Rodman himself, why the latter was called. Some of Rodman's later statements at least indicate the extent to which Rodman was willing to play the part of a Daniels witness.

He said, for example:

"I would naturally like to be impersonal but Admiral Sims has been thrown directly into the limelight and occupies the middle of the stage . . . hence my references to his personality. . . .

"Though doubtless my subsequent statements concerning Admiral Sims may appear to be too personal and that I shall have beggared and failed to controvert many of the salient statements which he has made, this will not be my primary motive. . . . I will try . . . more particularly to express my own opinion of what I believe to be the general sentiment of the Navy to the indiscreet and injudicious methods which he has employed in setting forth his views."

Rodman then condemned Admiral Sims' letter as "very indiscreet": "his indiscretions lay primarily in the tone, wording and phraseology of the letter."

Rodman then proceeded to criticize Sims for his disposition of forces, for the handling of the convoy system, etc., only to

admit shortly after that he knew nothing about these things, save "what I have read in the press."

To explain why the Department did not approve or even reply to Sims' recommendations, Rodman said:

"His status in London, as I understand it, was that of a liaison officer, which later was combined with the duties of Naval Attaché there. His title as 'Commander U. S. Naval Forces in European Waters' is particularly misleading. He was in reality a subordinate part of Naval Operations, with his office in London; he was its advanced agent; his was the relay office for all communications between Washington and the forces in the field."

During the cross-examination, however, Rodman admitted that his forces and all other naval forces overseas were subject to Sims' orders; that Sims could have removed him; that his authority was unquestioned. Senator Hale then asked Rodman what he meant by stating that Sims was only a liaison officer; that his title of "Commander" was misleading. Rodman replied:

"No, sir; I said it might be misleading to the public . . . my idea was this. The public — now just notice that I refer to the public, and this is intended for the public —

"*The Chairman:* Your testimony, Admiral, is for this committee.

"*Admiral Rodman:* Yes, sir; *but I am trying to explain to the public at the same time, sir, if I may, and what I was saying there was for the public.*

"*The Chairman:* Does the public have different opinions than this committee?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I do not know, sir. They get some mighty curious ones sometimes.

"*The Chairman:* Apparently!"

Thus naïvely did Rodman reveal the object of his testimony. He was not there to assist the committee to arrive at true conclusions concerning the issues involved. He was

there to make headlines for the press, in accordance with the Secretary's instructions.

Rodman, therefore, proceeded to impugn Admiral Sims' motives and misrepresent his statements. For example, he said:

"The motive which prompted this public investigation is veiled to me under a smoke-screen of words, and I cannot for the life of me see but that it will discredit the work of the Navy in this war. . . . The impression left on my mind, by giving his letter all this publicity, and *the evident effort throughout to discredit the Navy, is that it may have been the intention to give the impression that he had most of the responsibility for running this war and that the department fell down upon its job, because it did not follow his advice. This at the expense of the good name which the Navy so justly deserves.* This whole affair, in my mind, savours of ill-advised criticism against the Navy."

Rodman went on to liken the investigation to the Sampson-Schley controversy and to "regret exceedingly" that a "classmate of mine and a life long friend" should have caused such an investigation.

In discussing Admiral Sims' estimates of the probable results of our naval unpreparedness and delays, Rodman made the illuminating remark that there are "lies, damned lies and statistics," and implied that Sims' testimony fell into the latter category. "I do not believe there is a particle of truth in that statement." He qualified his remark a moment later, however, by saying, "I do not know anything about" the facts in question.

X

Willing though he was to contribute to the Daniels smoke screen, Rodman unwillingly and perhaps unwittingly, corroborated most of Admiral Sims' points. He admitted that many mistakes had been made by the Navy Department and

testified to facts revealing even greater inefficiency, though he apparently failed to recognize it as such. The only really satisfactory conditions he found were those that prevailed in the war zone after he had joined Sims' command.

"I do not for one minute wish to detract one iota of my opinion that Admiral Sims rendered most conspicuous and valuable services during the war. I can say that I know of no officer who was more conspicuous in this war and who rendered better service than Admiral Sims. . . . He was pre-eminently conspicuous among the officers who had rendered the most valuable services.

"There never was a time when there was the slightest difficulty of any character, class or description raised between Admiral Sims and me."

"No one could have been better in every way, shape and form than Admiral Sims," i. e., in the manner in which command was exercised over the forces abroad.

Rodman could not say this of Mr. Daniels or the Navy Department. He had received no intimation he was to be ordered abroad, nor had he even heard the possibility of sending battleships discussed until a few hours before his division was constituted and ordered to the Navy Yards to fit out for foreign service. He had not previously commanded the ships sent across. These ships had never previously operated together as a division. They were not of uniform type but had to be sent, as the others were not in fit condition. They were filled up with a large percentage of raw recruits just before sailing. Rodman did not know anything about the war plans, nor what the policy governing his activities abroad would be.

He knew, however, that there were war plans in the General Board. . . . "I do not care how good or bad they were, they were there."

"*The Chairman:* Did you ever see any of them?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I do not know. They kept them locked up, as I understood.

"*The Chairman:* Did you ever hear of them later in the war or were they put into practice?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir!

"*The Chairman:* You never heard of their being used?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir. I do not know a thing about them."

Consequently it was not surprising that on sailing for the war zone he had no definite instructions of any kind, not even as to whom he was to report, or with whom he was to operate. The following testimony is unusually diverting:

"*The Chairman:* Were you given any plans or policy, by the department, before you went over?

"*Admiral Rodman:* None whatever. I was simply directed to follow a designated route, and I followed that route and found myself amongst the British Grand Fleet.

"*The Chairman:* No policy or plan for the conduct of the war?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir.

"*The Chairman:* Did you know any such plan?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir; I did not need any. I was to go over to splice out the British Grand Fleet.

"*The Chairman:* Whom were you to report to over there?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I do not remember. I will tell you the incident. When I arrived, I reported in the usual naval fashion, my arrival, to the Department. That is a cut and dried affair.

"*The Chairman:* Did you report to Admiral Sims?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir. And then I got a telegram from the department: 'In future send all your reports and communications direct to Admiral Sims'; so that I was placed under Admiral Sims' command by a telegram from the department.

"*The Chairman:* After you had gotten over there?

"*Admiral Rodman:* Yes, sir. It was explained to me before I left the department, by Operations, that I was going over to splice out the British Grand Fleet. A verbal order is as good

to me as any other kind, you know. I knew what I was going for.

"*The Chairman:* Did the department give you any instructions to govern your actions after you were on the other side?

"*Admiral Rodman:* None, whatever.

"*The Chairman:* Was that not rather embarrassing to you?

"*Admiral Rodman:* Not to me. I knew what I went for. Never the slightest embarrassment.

"*The Chairman:* Just what did the department tell you to do when you went over there?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I could not repeat the words. I had an intimate conversation with the Acting Chief of Operations. The chief, I think, was abroad. He simply said, 'You are designated to take this command, to go over and splice out — and strengthen the Grand Fleet in their operations against the German main force. Why, Senator, I did not have to have any more instructions than that.

"*The Chairman:* And you were told to report to the head of the British Grand Fleet?

"*Admiral Rodman:* No, sir. I did report to the head of the Grand Fleet, and reported my arrival to the Department. I had my orders.

"*The Chairman:* What?

"*Admiral Rodman:* They left it to me to report to the Grand Fleet. That was my object in going. They supposed they could trust my judgment, or they would not have sent me.

"*The Chairman:* You were simply told to go over and report to the Grand Fleet?

"*Admiral Rodman:* Yes, sir."

XI

In general, it may be said that Admiral Rodman displayed the most remarkable uncertainty and ignorance about nearly all naval matters — an ignorance incomprehensible in a Commander-in-Chief — until one remembers that he is a Daniels Commander-in-Chief.

In his direct statement he seldom was sure of his facts.

His usual preface to his statements, upon which he based criticism of Admiral Sims, was of the following type:

"I have an idea that when our convoys were organized, etc."
"His status in London, as I understand it. . . ."
"I understand that the destroyers, etc., etc."
"My conception of his duties was."
"Reasoning from a standpoint of experience, I would naturally infer that" . . . etc.
"I have an idea that the war was not fought and won in London alone."
"The impression left upon my mind is that," etc.
"I believe that he has stated . . ."

Admiral Rodman's customary answer to embarrassing questions was "I do not remember" or "I do not know." He didn't remember what action the Department had taken on any recommendations. He was not even sure that he had made recommendations.

"I would not be surprised if I did, sir, but I do not recall. I am not trying to evade answering your question, Mr. Senator, but I do not remember anything. . . . I suppose I made hundreds of them. I do not know."

Even with regard to the Atlantic Fleet, in which he served in 1917, his ideas were most nebulous, as his testimony, quoted below, indicates:

"*The Chairman:* How many battleships were there in the Atlantic Fleet when you were serving there? . . .
"*Admiral Rodman:* I think there were eight. . . .
"*The Chairman:* I mean of the actual battle fleet as distinguished from the reserve.

. . . . . .

"*Admiral Rodman:* I think approximately sixteen.
"*The Chairman:* And for a fleet, a properly prepared battle fleet, how many destroyers would we need?
"*Admiral Rodman:* Oh! I do not know, sir. I think that

the General Board has laid down some rule, that for each battleship we should have so many destroyers."

And yet this was the Commander-in-Chief of our Pacific Fleet in 1920 who was testifying!

When Senator Hale asked Rodman what destroyers were with the fleet in 1917, a similar exhibition of ignorance occurred.

"*Admiral Rodman:* There were nowhere near the number of destroyers they should have had.

"*The Chairman:* Do you know how many you should have had?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I do not remember. No, sir.

"*The Chairman:* You say you had nowhere near as many as you should have had?

"*Admiral Rodman:* Yes, sir.

"*The Chairman:* Did you have half what you should have had?

"*Admiral Rodman:* I would rather not try to say. I do not know."

It would be profitless to examine further Admiral Rodman's testimony. It has been quoted thus extensively only to permit a visualization of the kind of evidence introduced in defence of the Department.

XII

Practically all of Admiral Wilson's testimony dealt with his own war services. His own summary of the subjects covered was:

"(1) The condition of the fleet just prior to the outbreak of war.

"(2) The organization of the patrol force; its object, organization and the plans adopted prior to and immediately after the declaration of war.

"(3) The routing and escorting of convoys carrying a great

part of our troops to France; together with their stores and supplies.

"(4) The work of a successful and important part of our naval forces overseas — the United States Naval Forces in France."

Very little of Admiral Wilson's direct statement is pertinent to this inquiry. His discussion of the preparedness of the "Fleet" in 1917 has been noted.

In dealing with his second subject, Admiral Wilson gave an illuminating indication of our war policy in 1917. A few days before war was declared the Department took its first active step in preparing for war. This was not a measure intended to strike a heavy blow at Germany at once, nor even to co-operate actively with the Allies. It was the purely defensive step of organizing all our effective light forces into a "Patrol Force" to scurry back and forth off the Atlantic coast, 3,000 miles from the war zone, "protecting" the United States from attack. This was carried even to the point of patrolling the North Carolina sounds, inshore waters impenetrable to submarines!

After war began the Navy Department gallantly held back our forces from the Allies and ignored Admiral Sims' and the Allies' recommendations that these anti-submarine craft be sent to the war zone. No less than 55 vessels, all of which would have been invaluable abroad, were thus employed after we entered the war.

Such a purely defensive policy was undoubtedly due to the lack of any guiding plan or policy. It was the old game of "watchful waiting" again. The Navy Department left it to time and accident to determine what the Navy's war operations should be.

When Senator Hale asked if there was any "comprehensive war plan," Admiral Wilson replied:

"I know nothing about that, sir."

"*The Chairman:* You were never shown any such plan?

"*Admiral Wilson:* I have never been attached to the organization that had charge of such work."

Truly it seems a curious attitude for a commander-in-chief of a great fleet, to regard war plans as esoteric reading matter which commanders of operating forces should not be shown, and of which they knew nothing.

XIII

It would be merely a useless repetition to quote extensively from the testimony of Admirals Niblack, Strauss and Fletcher. Their point of view and the evidence they offered was of the sort illustrated in Rodman and Wilson's rather pathetic efforts to comply with Mr. Daniels' smoke-screen plan.

Niblack in the course of his prepared statement made many petty flings at Admiral Sims. This is not the place to go into them. They were the cheapest kind of argumentum ad hominem.

Niblack, like Rodman and Wilson, had received no definite instructions on going abroad to command at Gibraltar. Fortunately, he passed through London and there received full instructions at Admiral Sims' headquarters. Like Rodman, he was enthusiastic in his praise of Sims' services in the war, and described the admirable efficiency of the administration of the forces overseas.

Strauss, Niblack and Fletcher all devoted much effort to contradicting Admiral Sims' estimate of the results of the delays and blunders of the Navy Department. That these had occurred was tacitly admitted. But, by depreciating the part we played in the war, these officers sought to show that our intervention was not sufficiently important, so that any delay could have postponed the end of the war. Yet, quite inconsistently, some of them maintained vigorously the effectiveness of our intervention, and endeavoured to

show that the end of the war was brought about by means quite independent of our naval intervention, however effective that may have been. As most of them were willing to admit that the American intervention did shorten the war, it seems difficult to follow their contention that an earlier and more effective intervention would not have shortened it even more.

In general, it was obvious from the testimony of these officers, that they were offended with Admiral Sims and indignant at the investigation, not because the facts alleged were questionable, but rather because they were so undoubtedly true as to seem to reflect not only on the Navy Department and Mr. Daniels, but upon the Navy as well.

Admiral Sims excellently summed up their attitude, in his rebuttal statement, when he said:

"Thus, in summarizing, it seems clear that the evidence which has been introduced by the various Department witnesses fully substantiates the points brought out in my letter of January 7th, 1920, and in my testimony before this committee. The testimony of the witnesses who were called at the request of the Department has been confined, in so far as it dealt with these issues at all:

"*First,* to explaining and justifying the Department's mistakes and delays.

"*Second,* to disputing the conclusions which I drew regarding the results of these mistakes and delays; and,

"*Third,* the expression of resentment that these things should have been brought to the public notice, and to attacks upon me for what they considered to have been my responsibility for this publicity."

CHAPTER XV

CORROBORATION OF ADMIRAL SIMS BY THE NAVY DEPARTMENT'S WITNESSES

I

THE testimony of Admirals Badger, McKean and Benson and of Captain W. V. Pratt, at least under cross-examination, was of an entirely different character than that of the smoke-screen admirals. Rear Admiral C. J. Badger had been the head of the General Board before and during the war. Admiral W. S. Benson had been Chief of Naval Operations. Rear Admiral McKean had been the head of the Material Section of Operations and for a time the Acting Chief of Operations. Captain W. V. Pratt had become Assistant Chief of Naval Operations about July 1, 1917, and had also served for a time as Acting Chief of Operations. These officers therefore were in a position to know exactly what was done toward getting the Navy ready for war between 1914 and 1917, and what was actually done by the Department after the declaration of war to make our naval forces effective against the enemy.

Each of these officers, save Admiral Benson, read a long prepared statement. That of Admiral Badger covered the whole of the activities of the General Board from 1914 to 1918; that of Admiral McKean, some 300 printed pages in length, reviewed the activities of his own section of Operations in preparing for war, and the action of the Navy Department after war began in getting the vessels of the Navy into a fit condition for war service; that of Captain Pratt was the most illuminating of all, for, although it re-

quired 700 pages only to print it, it was a clear, lucid and reasoned review of the policy of the Navy Department, of the reasons for unpreparedness, and for delays in intervening after war began, and of the efforts of himself and his chief to get on with the war in spite of almost insuperable difficulties and handicaps.

In many details, and verbally, these officers took exception to some of Admiral Sims' criticisms of the actual conduct of war operations. They confirmed absolutely his testimony so far as the state of unpreparedness in 1917, the lack of war plans, the shortage of personnel, the delay in active intervention was concerned.

In the next few pages will be found that part of Admiral Sims' final statement in which he collected together the admissions of the departmental witnesses.

In this part of his rebuttal testimony, Admiral Sims said:

"In concluding my testimony in March last, I stated that the documentary evidence which I had submitted established fully thirteen points. A very careful review of the evidence submitted by the Navy Department's witnesses shows that in no single instance were these points disproved. On the contrary, most of them were freely admitted, and the testimony of the Department's witnesses seemed to be designed, not to disprove them, but to explain them away or to obscure them by the raising of extraneous issues. In order to show you how fully the chief officers in the Navy Department confirmed these thirteen points, I propose to quote brief statements from their testimony substantiating each one of these points."

II

Admiral Sims then took up the first point of his summary: that of the unpreparedness for war in 1917.

"*Point 1. 'That, in spite of the fact that war had been going on for nearly three years, and our entry into it had been immi-*

nent at least from February 2, 1917, the vessels of the Navy were not ready for war service when the United States entered.'

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Chairman:* Would you say that the statement in the Secretary's annual report that the navy was from stem to stern ready for war in April, 1917, was justified?

. ."'*Admiral Benson:* Not from my point of view, no.

"'*Chairman:* Was its personnel adequate?

"'*Admiral Benson:* No.

"'*Chairman:* Were all the ships ready?

"'*Admiral Benson:* No, they were not all ready.

"'*Chairman:* Were they fully manned?

"'*Admiral Benson:* They were not fully manned.

"'*Chairman:* Was the navy mobilized?

"'*Admiral Benson:* It was not.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Was our fleet in 1917 in a condition to meet the German fleet constituted as it was at that time?

"'*Admiral Benson:* Theoretically, no, Mr. Chairman, it could not be.

"'*Chairman:* An admiral or commander-in-chief who would have informed the Department that his fleet was in such condition that he could have met the German fleet on a footing of equality would at least be lacking in a duty, would he not?

"'*Admiral Benson:* I should consider that he was. . . . With the situation as you stated it, I would have no hesitancy in saying so.'

Admiral Badger's Testimony

"'*Admiral Badger:* The action of the Secretary in 1914 (in failing to ask Congress for the increase of 19,600 men recommended by the General Board), prevented having adequate personnel for the fleet. . . . It was plain that it would be the part of prudence, and perhaps necessity, to have more personnel for the fleet. There is no doubt about that. Now, what prevented that from being accepted as a proper view, I do not know.'

"Admiral Badger at the same time stated that the addition

of the men recommended by the General Board in 1914 would have made possible the manning of all light craft which were not ready in 1917, because of lack of personnel. 'The responsibility lay with the administration . . . the Navy Department.'

Admiral McKean's Testimony

"'*Chairman:* Would you say that the Navy was ready from stem to stern (on April 6th, 1917)?

"'*Admiral McKean:* From my interpretation of that phrase, I would not, by a good deal.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* How long did it take to get . . . the light craft in a condition of matériel readiness for war?

"'*Admiral McKean:* Some of them two days, some two months and some of them six months.

"'*Chairman:* How long was it before substantially all of them were in readiness for war?

"'*Admiral McKean:* Oh, I should say six months.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Was the Secretary backing you . . . in your requests on matters necessary . . . to prepare the country for war?

"'*Admiral McKean:* Oh, I do not think that the Secretary or I ever said "preparing the country for war."'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* I gathered from your testimony that you would not say that the fleet as a whole was ready for war in matériel or personnel in April, 1917?

"'*Admiral McKean:* No, sir, it was not ready for war as to personnel or matériel, that is, a hundred per cent. ready or anything like a hundred per cent. ready.'

. . . . . .

"Admiral McKean testified that the action of Admiral Blue and the Secretary in 1914 led to a shortage of personnel in the Navy; that in 1916, the number recommended first was 9 or 10,000, finally increased to 28,000; that much of the matériel

depreciation of ships was due to lack of personnel; — that the Secretary was wrong in his action.

"'*Chairman:* And you think that certainly waiting, until two weeks before the war began, to increase the personnel was rather a tardy way of going about preparing the Navy?

"'*Admiral McKean:* Yes, I do; but you have got to take our people's attitude and our fall elections of the year before, and a lot of national policies into consideration before you condemn individuals.'

. . . . . .

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"Captain Pratt asked himself, in his direct statement, the following question:

"'Suppose that on April 6th, 1917, the United States fleet had been forced, in the state of preparedness it then was in, to meet single handed the German High Seas Fleet . . . what would be your opinion of the state of preparedness we were in?

"'*Captain Pratt: I would consider such a state of affairs to be criminal.*'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* Owing to our previous lack of preparedness in matériel and personnel, it was not possible to place them (our naval forces) at the front and ready to operate as soon as was desired, nor was the organization or administration of the Department at the time such that it lent itself to the most efficient handling of a great war . . . at the beginning. . . . These conditions were true when we entered the war and they lasted until the defects could be remedied; . . . *but by April, 1918,* . . . they had been in the main remedied.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* If the Navy, as it existed, had been ready for war in 1917, it would have relieved us of a certain amount of anxiety, due to the overload . . . which it placed on people who have suddenly to jump from peace-time activities to war-time activities.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* I have already told you of the Navy's struggle to prepare *after* war was declared.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* In this particular war, we were fortunate in being given a period of preparation, due largely to the fact that the control of the sea was held by the British fleet and that, barring the submarine, the German fleet was contained. Had the situation been reversed . . . our difficulties would have been greatly increased, if not rendered impossible.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Was the Navy ready for war as to personnel . . . when war was declared?

"'*Captain Pratt:* Not the way I would like to see it.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Who was responsible for this lack of preparation that rendered our forces incapable of quick action?

"'*Captain Pratt:* The Secretary, of course, was the responsible head.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* You would not repeat the policies and methods of handling the Navy that prevailed from 1914 to 1917?

"'*Captain Pratt:* No, sir, not if I had to prepare for another war.'"

III

Admiral Sims, in discussing the testimony of these officers concerning war plans, included the following quotations:

"Point 4. '*That the Navy Department supplied me with no plans or policy covering our participation in the war for three months after our entry therein.*'

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Chairman:* Why did you not outline just what his (Sims') duty should be?

"'*Admiral Benson:* I did not give Admiral Sims his definite and particular instructions. My impression is, although I do not know that, that they were given by the Secretary. . . . I

think he had sufficient instructions for the duty he was called upon to perform. . . . I did not give him such instructions, because I did not think it necessary.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Was there a sound, complete and well defined plan for conducting this particular war?

"'*Admiral Benson:* For this particular war I do not think so; only such general plans or policies as I have already outlined. . . . No definite war plan was drawn up on paper. No, Mr. Chairman, there was not.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* What definite plans were drawn up?

"'*Admiral Benson:* I cannot give you that information. I cannot tell you that now. I assume that there were (plans made). I know that all that was necessary was done and that is all that I do know. . . . The purposes that any plan would have accomplished were accomplished. I assume that as the policies went out to my subordinates, what we had of a planning section drew up the necessary plans or memoranda or instructions or whatever you wish to call them.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* Did you formulate any definite operational plans?

"'*Admiral Benson:* I merely outlined general policies and left it to the subordinates to develop any plans that were necessary for carrying them into execution. How many plans were developed at all it would be very difficult or practically impossible for me to state. . . . There must have been plans, but I cannot recall them.'

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* There were not issued to Admiral Sims any instructions beyond the simple statement of July, 1917. . . . The Department relied on him, in close touch with the Allies, while guided by its fundamental principles, to formulate all general war plans within the area of his command and to send them back to us as the basis on which we could begin our work.'"

IV

There was no question in the minds of the officers who served in the Department but that our available forces were not sent immediately. Hence their corroboration of Admiral Sims again:

"Point 5. '*That, having information as to the critical situation of the Allies, the Navy Department did not promptly assist them, and thereby prolonged the war by delaying the sending of anti-submarine vessels, none reaching Europe for nearly a month after war was declared and over two and one-half months elapsing before thirty vessels arrived.*'

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Admiral Benson:* We might have sent more destroyers (and other anti-submarine craft . . .) but I doubt if I would have sent more destroyers because I felt very strongly the necessity of safeguarding the battleships (and the American coast). . . . There were a great many (light craft) that we had use for over here but I think, as far as we could get them ready and in my judgment they could be spared, they were sent over.'

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* That there were delays, that there were mistakes, that it took time before we got into the war in full force is fully and frankly admitted. . . . Some of the reasons why our Navy did not quickly enter the war in full force might, . . . with the knowledge gained in this war, be avoided in the future. . . . Some of these (which in my opinion could be avoided) are: lack of material preparation in the ships concerned; lack of adequate supplies, and of supply and repair bases; lack of sufficient personnel and facilities to train them; a building program planned specifically to meet the needs of the war the country intends to engage in; modern methods of organization and administration and the maintenance of a nucleus organization in peace; a budget system; . . .'

ADMIRAL MCKEAN'S TESTIMONY

"'*Admiral McKean:* While there were and always will be delays, delays in subordinated parts in coming to conclusions on what to base their recommendations; delays in convincing superiors of the desirability or necessity of approving these recommendations; delays in getting necessary appropriations; delays in obtaining material and men with which to carry out the plans . . . the responsible authority, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Secretary of the Navy, the Committees of Congress must each be given time for consideration and deliberation to enable them to act wisely.'

. . . . . .

"'*Chairman:* If these recommendations (of Sims) could have been followed out very shortly after they were made, do you not think it would have been a very good thing?

"'*Admiral McKean:* Most of them yes, decidedly.

"'*Chairman:* So that if there was delay it was unfortunate?

"'*Admiral McKean:* In some of them . . . in the case of the destroyers yes . . . and the anti-submarine craft.'

CAPTAIN PRATT'S TESTIMONY

"'*Captain Pratt:* We should have had about fifty-one destroyers, six tenders, about seven gunboats, two cruisers and twelve submarines. . . . All these vessels could have been sent at once if they had been in shape.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* The reason why these ships were not sent at that time can of course best be explained by the Chief of Naval Operations. . . . Personally I was not in accord with this policy, as I favored making concessions and sending the ships at once.'

"'*Captain Pratt:* Many delays were caused by discussions in the Department. Sims was left free in executing decisions but a great many explanations were asked. . . . *In the case of convoys the Department was opposed to the scheme at first until the Admiralty could prove it would be successful. . . . They were not ready to accept decisions of others or by United States representatives in Europe. . . . It would have been better if the convoy had been adopted earlier.*'"

V

The Department's failure to support Admiral Sims in the early months of the war was also freely admitted, as the following quotations demonstrate:

"Point 8. *'That the Department's representative with the allied admiralties was not supported, during the most critical months of the war, either by the adequate personnel or by the adequate forces that could have been supplied.'*

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Admiral Benson:* He (Sims) was not supplied with all the assistants that it would have been desirable for him to have had.'

Admiral Badger's Testimony

"On April 5, 1917, the General Board recommended that officers be sent abroad to London and Paris. They gave a long list of the subjects on which data was desired and suggested that ten officers be sent to London and six to France, stating that:

"'The General Board recommended this number of officers so that the work can be divided up and expedited and believe that if this number of officers is detailed the information can be obtained in about two months.'

"Only two officers were sent and none more until four months later — then only five instead of the sixteen recommended.

Admiral McKean's Testimony

"'*Admiral McKean:* There is no doubt that Admiral Sims should have had additional assistance: Much more than he had, as his duties expanded, but, likewise, there is no doubt that we were all short-handed. . . .'

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* Admiral Sims has a just complaint in this. He should have been allowed more assistants and earlier.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* The Department made a mistake in not

sending more officers to Sims. He should have had them. . . . *It was a stupendous task with which he was confronted. . . . An adequate staff was required from the beginning.'*

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* It seems to me that the facts pretty well speak for themselves; that if we had intended to immediately dispatch our destroyers abroad we could have had them in material shape, thoroughly manned to the minute. That is not an impossible thing to do, and if it was not done it is because steps were not taken to get them ready for it. It could have been done, I believe.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* I would have sent them over as soon as I could lay my hands on them. But the power of decision was not mine.'"

VI

The attitude taken by the higher authorities in the Department toward the question of co-operating with the Allies, and their violation of fundamental military principles was similarly admitted:

"Point 9. '*That the Navy Department violated fundamental military principles in dispersing forces away from the critical area in order to meet diversions of the enemy.*'

"Point 10. '*That the Navy Department, in the first months of the war, attempted the direction of details although three thousand miles distant from the scene of active operations, where the situation was changing from day to day.*'

"Point 12. '*That the Navy Department, by controlling the operations and movements of certain forces within the war area, violated the fundamental military principle of unity of command.*'

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Admiral Benson:* The Department would have been derelict in its duty, in my opinion, even admitting they were all sound and right, to have adopted recommendations without due delib-

eration and careful consideration of all the conditions surrounding the situation. . . . Even if the recommendations were absolutely perfect, we would not have been justified in doing it.'

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* The Department was wrong in interfering with the detailed movements of our forces at the front.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* Operations at the front must be handled from London. . . . I think that in certain minor instances we may have interfered with him (Sims) in the details of ships' operations. . . . We issued direct orders to ships that were over there, when it would have been wiser to have turned them over to him bodily and said to him: "Order them where you please." Those, however, are mistakes that are liable to happen under all conditions, and I do not think they were very material.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* If the Admiral was handicapped by interference with the movement of his forces in contact with the enemy, this was wrong in principle.'

"Point 11. '*That the Navy Department, in not clearly defining the responsibility and delegating authority to its representatives in Europe, failed to follow sound principles, common alike to the business and military professions.*'

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Admiral Benson:* I think there is an exaggerated idea as to Admiral Sims' position that he occupied. I think the Allies understood that the operations in Europe were being directed from Washington.'

. . . . . .

"'*Admiral Benson:* As I said, I was the responsible officer and I sized up the situation and made my decisions.'

"'*Admiral Benson:* I was willing to do it (that is, send forces abroad) but not until I had personally investigated. I did not have sufficient confidence in Admiral Sims' judgment and

in his decision to warrant me of relieving myself of that grave responsibility.'

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* It is the universal practice of the Navy for flag officers to make the recommendations for their subordinates. The final assignments are made by the Secretary in consultation with the Chief of Naval Operations. It is conducive to efficiency to associate those officers together whose relations are bound to be harmonious.'

"(Captain Pratt admitted that Admiral Sims was not consulted about the choice of his subordinates.)

"Point 13. '*That the Navy Department failed to keep its representative abroad completely informed as to its plans affecting dispatch and disposition of forces in the war zone, and frequently reached decisions in such matters through information gained from sources other than its representative in the war zone.*'

"The cases cited in the direct testimony were not questioned by any witnesses. The fact was admitted and an effort made to justify the Department's negligence.

Admiral Benson's Testimony

"'*Admiral Benson:* I think the Allies were kept informed of the development of all of our ideas and intentions. . . . While a good deal of the information may not have gone directly to Admiral Sims we satisfied ourselves that the allied naval authorities were kept sufficiently well informed with regard to the development of the situation.'

. . . . . .

Captain Pratt's Testimony

"'*Captain Pratt:* He should have been informed of all departmental plans for operations abroad, but I do not think he was, and in that way I hold myself rather negligent.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* Admiral Sims ought to have had this in-

formation; but those were strenuous times and no doubt a lot of information he wanted and should have had he did not get.'

. . . . . .

"'*Captain Pratt:* Admiral Sims knows if he did not get answers. He knows whether he did get them or not. If Admiral Sims says "I did not get an answer to this," why, that stands, he did not get it.'

. . . . . .

"Captain Pratt did not know if any effort was made to get prompt and favourable action on Sims' recommendations.

"'*Captain Pratt:* I tried personally very frequently, and would go with these cables, acting myself, as a sort of nuisance, possibly, in the subject, to get this done, and I have no doubt that we were doing all this . . . but not being the actual executive I . . . should hate to say . . . that I know that every one of them was carried out.'"

VII

It would be impossible within the limits of this book, to deal in detail with all the testimony introduced by Mr. Daniels and his witnesses. It is to be hoped that the whole of the proceedings of the investigation will be made available to the public.

In his rebuttal statement, Admiral Sims himself made the following summary of the essential points confirmed by the statements of the witnesses called at the request of Secretary Daniels:

"Review of Conduct of the War by the Navy Department

"The testimony of the Department's witnesses which has been quoted, together with other evidence that has been brought before this investigation, seems to me to have established conclusively the following features of the manner in which the Navy Department functioned during the war:

"*1st.*— That in the years before the war, no real effort was made to get the Navy in a condition which would make possible

immediate and effective operations under the conditions which would obviously prevail in the event of war with Germany; though this war had seemed probable after 1915.

"*2nd.*— That the Navy Department was responsible for the shortage of personnel, which made it impossible adequately to man the vessels of the Navy in 1917, or to provide the necessary officers and men required for the war expansion of the Navy.

"*3rd.*— That although the war had been in progress long enough for the probable activities of the U. S. Navy to be foreseen, in the event of America's entrance into the war, no plans whatsoever had been made to meet the special conditions under which the Navy had to fight.

"*4th.*— That the Navy Department's organization was not adequate to meet the situation which developed after we entered the war. The Secretary not only seems to have failed to initiate an effort to improve or correct the inadequacy of the organization or the lack of preparedness and plans, but also to have strenuously resisted such efforts as were made. A makeshift reorganization to meet war conditions had to be devised by the individual effort of many individual officers, working for the most part independently, and often without any co-ordination whatever of their efforts. Only their own initiative and voluntary co-operation made possible the achievements of the Navy in the war.

"*5th.*— That for at least the first three or four months after we came into the war, the Navy had no consistent policy, or if it had any, failed to carry it out. It had no adequate war plans or, if such existed, they were not put into effect.

"*6th.*— That during this time, the Navy Department's representative abroad was ignored and his recommendations in practically every case disregarded. Requests from the Allies for reinforcements in many cases were unheeded. No organization was created by the Department to meet the situation, by gathering the necessary information and by taking the steps to meet the situation revealed by this information.

"*7th.*— That during these months, the activities of the Navy Department were inspired not by the announced policy of co-operating whole-heartedly with the Allies and defeating the submarine campaign, but were dictated essentially by avowed motives

of prudence and self-interest; by the desire to defend the American coast, American shipping, and to maintain intact the American battle fleet, regardless of what fate might be overtaking the Allies. This defensive policy was carried to such an extent, that, to cite only one example, naval vessels were set to patrolling the North Carolina Sound in waters impenetrable to submarines.

"*8th.*— That at the time the President sent his dispatch to me, July 4, 1917, the policy which he announced had not been followed by the Navy Department. On the contrary, that its action had been in contradiction to the very principles which he laid down.

"*9th.*— That after the President's message was sent to me, the Department suddenly displayed a new spirit in its attitude toward the Allies and toward my recommendations; immediately adopted the convoy system; sent many additional anti-submarine craft abroad; provided me with additional officers; adopted a new destroyer program; and took many other steps looking toward an active prosecution of the war, all of which measures could and should have been put in force at least three months earlier.

"*10th.*— That these conditions were well-known in the Navy Department at the time; that the officers in the Department, themselves commented upon and criticized them; and my letter of January 7th, 1920, was written only because I feared that these errors would be so completely forgotten that their repetition in future would be more than probable; and that I considered it my duty officially to invite the Department's attention to them."

CHAPTER XVI

VICTORY IN SPITE OF DANIELS

(The Testimony of Admiral Badger and Captain Pratt)

I

ADMIRALS BADGER and McKean and Captain Pratt described in great detail the endeavours of the officers who served in the Navy Department to improve the efficiency of the Navy. They fully succeeded in demonstrating the fact that such steps toward preparedness as were taken before 1917 were accomplished in spite of Mr. Daniels; and that our naval effort in the war was ultimately made successful, after nearly a year of delay, not because of the activities of the Secretary, but in spite of him.

Each of these officers gave practically the same description of conditions in the Navy Department during the Daniels régime. Authority and responsibility were divided up among many conflicting and overlapping agencies. No definite plans and policies were in existence to insure the functioning of the whole organization as a unit, but each was left to follow its own inclinations or the behests of the Secretary, without any common guiding policy or direction. The Secretary himself did not understand and was not interested in the fighting efficiency of the Navy, but only in what he would call the general good of the Navy; that is, in the welfare of the personnel. He was so absorbed in a multitude of small problems that he failed to even consider the most important of all. He lacked decision and postponed pressing

matters for days and even months. He was suspicious of the naval officers and refused to trust them or heed their advice, unless he was convinced that the officer was only seeking to carry out blindly and in servile spirit the Secretary's own desires.

In an organization like the Navy Department, with its many semi-independent parts, the only co-ordination was that exercised by the Secretary himself. There was no naval officer who had authority to give any orders to the Bureaus or to see that a common policy was followed by all. Everything depended upon the action of the Secretary himself. When he failed to act, plans could not be approved. When the plans were not approved, the thirteen independent divisions of the Department were without a common purpose or a unified direction. The naval officers in the Office of Operations and in the General Board undoubtedly did everything in their power to get the Navy into condition for war. But at every turn they found their efforts blocked. Their proposals were listened to politely and ignored. Their recommendations were seldom, if ever, definitely rejected. These were simply filed. Consequently the hands of the officers were tied.

All of the officers who served in Operations admitted that the actual conditions were as Admirals Sims, Plunkett, Fiske, Fullam and Mayo, and Captains Palmer, Laning and Taussig had described them. They sought in their testimony to explain that everything that they could have done, they had done; that the faulty organization of the Department, the policies of the Administration, the attitude of the Secretary and the action of Congress had all combined to nullify the efforts of the naval officers in the Department. Their testimony, in other words, was primarily a defence of their own services, and secondarily an attempt to explain or excuse the conditions whose existence in 1917 they admitted willingly or reluctantly.

II

Rear Admiral Badger, it is true, as a representative of the old guard in the Navy, sternly disapproved of Admiral Sims and blindly denied in general terms the truth of the latter's criticisms. But when cross-examined even Badger had to contradict or explain away many of his own flat statements.

Admiral Badger, for example, said:

"The gist of the criticism of the operations of the Navy Department and the Navy now under investigation is contained in the charges of unpreparedness to enter the war; absence of war plans or policies at the commencement of the war; vacillating and hand-to-mouth policies and plans after war was declared resulting in extending the duration of the war and thereby enormously increasing the Allied war losses in lives, ocean tonnage and money.

"To each and all of these, I enter emphatic denial. I do not mean to say that we had attained perfection in the Navy — we never shall; that no errors of judgment or mistakes were made —they will always occur, but I assert that the Navy when it entered the war was as a whole, well prepared and administered."

Admiral Badger's main ground for his belief was indicated in the next paragraph of his statement.

"Despite the adverse criticisms that have recently been widely circulated it may confidently be maintained that the Navy met and efficiently stood the stress of a great war; it aided greatly the allied nations, and *if success is any test of a military or any other organization, then the alleged shortcomings of the Navy and its directing heads can properly and justly be dismissed from serious consideration.*"

In other words, we won the war and should now forget any unpleasant failings and hope we will have as good luck next time!

Admiral Badger further qualified his denials when he went on to point out that we really could not prepare for war before April 6, 1917, as

"the policy of this country was one of strict neutrality. The people, the Congress and the Administration hoped until the last moment to be able to keep out of the war with honour, and every effort was made by the Government to avoid showing bias as between the belligerents, as well as any expectation on our part of becoming embroiled. Although there were many, particularly in the Navy, who believed our eventual participation in the war to be inevitable, the Navy Department was handicapped in making preparations which would indicate to belligerent agents in close watch upon our doings, that we were preparing for war. Only the normal increase in our naval power was under these conditions permitted us."

No more dangerous and mistaken doctrine than this can be imagined. It could be pardoned in an ultra-pacifist. It is inexcusable from a naval officer. If we had shown belligerent agents that we were preparing for war we might very easily have escaped war. Our very failure to prepare was an invitation to the Prussian war lords to heap upon us the impudent affronts and insults that we swallowed between 1915 and 1917.

Admiral Badger often reiterated this curious ultra-pacifism. Thus he said of the fleet that on April 6, 1917:

"In some types, principally of small craft, we were deficient and that mainly because of the rapid development of the submarine warfare."

We had not been able to build light craft, as such a step "was denied us by our neutral attitude and effort to avoid giving ground for the belief that we were preparing to take part in the war. *I would like to accentuate this, for it explains many things.*"

It most certainly does!

To have prepared our Navy for war after 1914 would not have meant that we were intending to enter the war, as Badger naïvely implies. It would have meant merely that we intended to defend our national honour and national interests, and to do it as effectively as possible, and that if compelled to go to war, we intended to be ready for the emergency.

Later on, Admiral Badger unwittingly gave his case away when he said that there was "no lack of effort to prepare the fleet for any eventuality, as soon as our change from a neutral to a war policy became possible."

It is hard to believe that a former commander-in-chief of the fleet should really think that readiness for war is incompatible with neutrality.

III

Admiral Badger had denied the criticism that we entered the war without adequate plans. A little later he proceeded to say that our plans were all right; but that they were not approved and that in any case the enemy refused to fight the only kind of war for which these plans provided.

In his prepared statement he said:

"one of the principal criticisms now before this committee for investigation is that the Navy Department had no plans. That is both unjust and incorrect. We had plans, well considered ones. *The trouble is that the plans and the execution of them did not meet with the approval of the critics.*"

Thus we learn that Admiral Badger did not really intend to deny the criticism that the Navy had no plans that were adequate to the situation or were used in 1917. He admitted this. No one, indeed, had denied that the Navy had a war plan for operations on the Atlantic coast and in the Caribbean against Germany. But that plan did not apply to the war and was never even consulted during the war. Ad-

miral Badger, in other words, was quibbling, in the interest of Mr. Daniels, and making statements intended to give false impressions. By denying charges that had not been made, he tried to make it appear that he was answering criticisms whose correctness he himself was later compelled to admit. This attitude is characteristic of the testimony of Admiral Badger and is the prevailing feature of the testimony given later by Admiral McKean and by the Secretary himself.

IV

Rear Admiral Badger introduced a long list of memoranda presented by the General Board to the Secretary of the Navy between 1914 and 1918. He knew full well that a memorandum, even of the General Board, is only so much waste paper unless it is acted upon by the Secretary, officially approved and put into effect. He knew, too, as he testified later, that the efforts of the General Board had been almost as consistently ignored as those of Admiral Fiske and Admiral Sims. In spite of this Badger offered these unapproved and officially ignored memoranda of the General Board as "Departmental War Plans." The Secretary later made desperate efforts to convince the committee, on the authority of Badger, that these memoranda were in reality official war plans.

Fortunately, however, the Senate Committee insisted that a list of all such General Board memoranda be prepared with a notation as to what action was taken on them by the Department. Admiral Badger submitted such a list of "subjects acted upon by the General Board, upon which recommendations were submitted to the Secretary of the Navy relative to the World War."

An examination of this list shows how little importance the Secretary attached to these recommendations from 1914 to 1917; no matter how hysterically convinced he may have

seemed in his testimony, in May, 1920, that these recommendations were the war plans of the Department.

The following figures will indicate to what extent the recommendations of the General Board were followed:

Recommendations Affecting War	1914 to 1917	Apr. 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918	Total
Total number of recommendations	45	70	115
Officially approved	6	8	14
Officially approved but not made effective.	7	10	17
Partially approved	5	6	11
Officially disapproved	3	1	4
Officially ignored without action	14	32	46
Officially ignored and disregarded	10	12	22

Sixty per cent. of all the General Board's recommendations were ignored; only 1/8 or 12 per cent. were approved and actually put into effect. Most of those that were approved were relatively unimportant matters. There was no record of any action on the memoranda submitted by the General Board on February 4, 1917, March 20, 1917, and April 5, 1917, which Admiral Badger quoted in full and which Secretary Daniels later calmly and impudently claimed were the plans we used on entering the war. When Admiral Badger read the General Board paper of February 4, 1917, on "steps to be taken to meet a possible condition of war with the Central European Powers," he explained that he read it "in order to show that the Department was neither neglectful nor ignorant of the critical situation as has been charged."

Badger admitted that no action had been taken on this paper nor on the others mentioned above, and did not know whether any of the recommendations it contained had been carried out. The activity of the General Board or of Admiral Sims in making recommendations to the Navy Department certainly neither explains nor excuses the failure of

the Department to take action, or its long delays in putting recommendations into effect. Admiral Badger and Secretary Daniels reflect gravely on the intelligence of the country when they pretend that a recommendation by any one, even the General Board, is an official action of the Navy Department.

The failure to take action and to prepare the Navy for war rests entirely on the person responsible for ignoring the recommendations. Admiral Badger's testimony merely served to fix that responsibility on the Secretary himself, by his proof of the fact that the General Board had had as little success as Admiral Sims in getting action from the Secretary.

V

A few quotations from the cross-examination of Admiral Badger will show the quality of his testimony.

When the chairman asked him if any plan was drawn up to provide for our operating with the Allies against the German submarines Badger replied:

"No; because it was believed that we should have to do what the people abroad were doing: to follow their lead. You understand that we entered the war under the handicap that we came in to co-operate after the others had been at war three years. Our neutrality prevented us from completing the necessary ships to prepare for a new type of war. . . . The idea of the Secretary of the Navy and of the General Board and of every other Department so far as I am informed, was that our plan must be dependent upon the plans of the Allies."

Consequently no attempt was made to prepare plans for a war in co-operation with the Allies; our neutrality prevented us before April, 1917, from finding out what the Allied plans might be; after April, 1917, we had to carefully study the allied plans and delay action for months before we

accepted them. Such was Badger's explanation of our war plans and their execution.

"*The Chairman:* Had any plan been formulated for a war against submarines?

"*Admiral Badger:* We could not say that, no, sir. . . ."

"*The Chairman:* Had any plans been formulated, prior to our entrance into the war, for sending anti-submarine craft abroad?

"*Admiral Badger:* Not that I know of.

"*The Chairman:* Was any general plan governing anti-submarine operations ever drawn up in the Navy Department?

"*Admiral Badger:* I do not know; I do not believe that any such plan was prepared.

"*The Chairman:* Was it better, in the opinion of the General Board, to keep the anti-submarine craft on the Atlantic coast or to send them to the war zone?

"*Admiral Badger:* Now, you are opening a very broad question, Senator, and one that is very controversial.

"*The Chairman:* Your report of May 3 recommended sending abroad as much as possible.

"*Admiral Badger:* As much as the condition of our fleet and the number that we had would permit. Now, I do not object to saying this as one view of the situation. It looked in April and May very much as though peace would have to be declared by the British and the French — the Allies. The reports that we were receiving were most pessimistic here, that they could not hold out. In that case, if the German navy had remained untouched, there was no telling how we in this country might become involved with Germany ourselves, and therefore it was a very doubtful policy whether we should strip ourselves and run the chance of coming in at the last moment and being defeated on the other side as far as prevention of the collapse of the allied powers was concerned, or whether we should look out for ourselves and our own fleet until we could see about it. Therefore, the men who had a responsibility of that kind considered it from that point of view also, that we must look out for our own fleet, in addition to the fleets of the other powers concerned, and not strip our battleships of protection against the submarines that

might attack them. We had our fleet here in the Chesapeake. We went to sea for practice purposes, to keep them up, without any real protection, and it was a very dangerous thing, but we had to take the chance, because we had to send all of our other vessels abroad."

In further cross-examination Admiral Badger was obliged to admit that our policy was one of pacifism until 1917 as far as Germany was concerned; although there was no doubt that if we entered the war we would be on the side of the Allies, no steps were taken to meet such a contingency for fear of offending Germany. On the other hand, in 1916 we did make a radical departure by adopting a building program of battleships and battle cruisers intended to very greatly increase our naval power. Badger was at a loss to explain this curious departure from the otherwise consistent pacifism of the Daniels administration.

VI

Just as Admiral Badger had described the work of the General Board, so Captain W. V. Pratt, the next witness, gave a detailed account of the work of the Office of Operations. Pratt freely admitted the accuracy of most of the criticisms of Admiral Sims and, like Badger, sought to explain why we were so unprepared for war in 1917 and why it took so long to get into the war.

In discussing Admiral Sims' criticisms, Captain Pratt took the letter of January 7, 1920, and analyzed it paragraph by paragraph. In no case did he question a single point of fact. Nine-tenths of the subject matter he freely and frankly admitted. He took issue with some of Admiral Sims' criticisms, especially when these were such that they could be construed as a criticisms of the Office of Operations. But, as Admiral Sims later pointed out, every important contention he had made was fully corroborated by Captain

Pratt in his prepared statement. Captain Pratt's whole testimony in fact was based on the assumption that we entered the war without plans, with the ships unready, with wholly inadequate personnel, without an efficient organization. His only endeavour was to show that after war began the Office of Operations did everything it could to overcome these initial handicaps, to expand the Navy, to remake the departmental organization and to get into the war actively as soon as possible.

He took issue with Admiral Sims, therefore, only on the question of the wisdom of certain of the decisions made by the Office of Operations after war began. The Navy was very slow in getting into the war, but this Pratt thought to be due to the initial handicaps and to the imperfect departmental organization. Pratt's testimony is therefore an even stronger indictment of the policies enforced upon the Navy from 1913 to 1917, than anything Admiral Sims himself said.

In this connection a single quotation out of a score that could be selected should suffice to illustrate the general import of Pratt's exceedingly able and frank statement. In commenting on paragraph 10 of Admiral Sims' letter, in which Sims had said that his cables in 1917 had not produced any result, Captain Pratt said:

"The statement of fact in the paragraph is correct, but the conclusion drawn 'but without producing the desired result' is misleading and subject to discussion. It produced the desired effect at once and every effort was made to put all the naval forces desired in the war zone, but owing to our previous lack of preparation in matériel and personnel it was not possible to place them at the front and ready to operate, as soon as was desired. Nor was the organization or administration of the Department at home such that it lent itself to the most efficient handling of a great war at the beginning.

"The entire building program of the Navy had to be changed to make it effective to engage in operations for which it had never

been planned, that is, to operate against the submarine exclusively.

"These conditions were true when we entered the war and they lasted until the defects could be remedied, but by April, 1918 . . . these had been in the main remedied, and many ships . . . had been sent across the Atlantic and were operating in the war zone. By this time the organization of the Office of Operations had been modified and the methods of administration changed."

At another time Captain Pratt emphasized his striking indictment of our unpreparedness in 1917 when he said:

". . . The forces did not go over as fast as any of us desired, but the reasons for it do not lie in the failure to accept the recommendations made. The failure to get into the war immediately, in full force, upon the declaration, is not the fault of Operations or the failure to recognize the character of the war, and where it was being waged, but were, for the most part, due to natural causes and to causes which antedated our entry into the war. It was not possible to press a button and move ships, men, and supplies with the rapidity desired either by Sims or by the department. All of the destroyers were not ready to move instantly; navy yards and mercantile ship yards were not ready to undertake the vast amount of work thrown at them. Submarine chasers had to be built. Tugs had to be bought, refitted, and built. Yachts had to be bought, stripped and made ready for war service. The transports, which were the seized German ships, had to be repaired, manned, and put into service. Other transports and supply ships had to be built. Arrangements had to be made with the Army for the transport of its great military force to Europe.

"The reorganization and expansion of the Office of Operations and of the bureaus had to be undertaken. The co-ordination of the bureaus with this office had to be developed; the methods of administration had to be divested of their pre-war conservatism, the red tape abolished, and more authority given to subordinates in the matter of detail; habits of quick and accurate thinking and quick decision under the stress of war, had to be developed.

The personnel had to be expanded and trained; the task of creating sufficient reserves of war supplies had to be undertaken. The organization of the various bodies which acted as the co-operating agents between the Navy Department and all other departments and with the allied representatives on this side of the water had to be undertaken. Though we knew that the immediate and pressing problem was the suppression of the submarine menace and acted in accordance with the knowledge, we also knew that this problem had to be considered in connection with all the other problems I have outlined. Our country could not afford to make any disjointed effort nor to move forward along any one line of action, without due consideration of all lines. We had to profit, if we could, by any previous mistakes of our allies, and we had to prepare for the contingency of a long war. The situation demanded of us that we should make a united, powerful effort, and in this effort the naval establishment had to play its appointed rôle, in harmony with every other effort our country was putting forth. Every master of military warfare and naval warfare knows that the great general's first concern is with the reserves. The weight of the first blow is ultimately controlled by the strength and co-ordination of the reserves. To build up our reserves was one of our naval problems and had to be considered at the same instant we were called upon to strike at the front.

"All of these conditions were difficulties to surmount. They retarded the flow of ships and supplies to Admiral Sims, but the spirit was willing, and the principles he laid down were, in the main, accepted. He always had back of him the loyal support of the office of operations and of the bureaus."

Again and again these same points were emphasized in Pratt's testimony. He was not defending Mr. Daniels save in form. He was in reality drawing a vivid picture of the results of the Daniels régime, all the more deadly because it was camouflaged as part of the case for the defence.

VII

Captain Pratt gave the details of the long fight he made to get the Secretary to approve the change in the building program and concentrate effort on new destroyers. This plan was at first a minority opinion even in the Office of Operations. From March until July, Captain Pratt fought to secure the adoption of so obvious a measure. It was not until July 20th that the Secretary finally approved the plan. It was not until October 6th, that Congress appropriated the money to carry it into effect. Six precious months had been lost, with the result that less than a dozen of the 250 new destroyers undertaken actually saw active service prior to the armistice.

Similarly, Captain Pratt admitted that no definite statement of policy was sent to Sims, or drawn up in the Department until July. The statement finally signed by the Secretary on July 3, 1917, was drawn up by Pratt himself, on his own initiative. Otherwise the Department would probably have muddled through the whole war without attempting to formulate any general policy.

These instances are typical cases of the trend of the testimony of Captain Pratt. He was ostensibly a witness for the defence. His testimony was often verbally critical of Sims. Yet, in substance, the evidence he presented was a convincing confirmation of the testimony of all witnesses who had criticized and condemned the Daniels methods and policies.

Captain Pratt had much to say also of the splendid work done by Admiral Sims during the war. He described in detail Sims' position abroad and pointed out the importance of his position with its six-fold responsibilities. In fact Captain Pratt said:

"The Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy, in so far as I know, had the fullest confidence in Admiral

Sims. His reports were excellent and there is no officer in the service who could have done the work he was doing better or even so well. He understood our need for information and the desirability of spreading it effectively. He kept the department well informed. During the war it was thought that the closest co-operation existed between his office in London and our office in Washington.

"The Chief of Naval Operations has often said, if I recollect correctly, that he could not find another officer to take Sims' place."

VIII

Captain Pratt endeavoured to present a valise full of the personal memoranda he drew up in 1917 as the "war plans" of the Department. It is quite probably true that, in the absence of any real plans, Captain Pratt's memoranda and the individual suggestions of many other officers provided the ideas and the direction that should have been provided by war plans. But the fact that resort had to be made to such makeshift substitutes for war plans does not entitle Captain Pratt to call his personal, unsigned, undated, unapproved suggestions "war plans." They were not war plans. That Captain Pratt knew full well. Yet he did not hesitate in 1920 to label each of them "PLAN" and even to assign numbers to them! The Secretary, following his example with alacrity, quoted Pratt's testimony as proof of the thoroughness of our war plans.

It is true that Pratt was only one of the officers in the Navy Department in 1917 who did attempt to plan ahead. His services in the Office of Operations were of inestimable value. He spared no effort to get on with the war and to support Admiral Sims. But his activities are neither an explanation nor an excuse for the conditions our Navy faced in 1917.

IX

Captain Pratt's main criticism of Admiral Sims' letter and testimony was directed against what Pratt assumed to be Sims' contention, that the Navy Department should have turned over all powers of decision to him in London. This same assertion was made by many other witnesses. Yet, as a matter of fact, Admiral Sims never advocated any such measure.

Pratt for example said:

> " The Admiral was not the only person in this war with whom the Department had dealings. It seems necessary to explain that Admiral Sims, important though he was, could not and ought not to attempt to handle the work of the entire Navy."

Admiral Sims' point was, of course, not that the Department should resign full direction of the war to him, but that the Department should itself exercise its powers of decision.

That was Admiral Sims' whole point: not that his particular recommendations were not followed, but that no action whatever was taken by the Department for months. Ultimately every one of Sims' chief recommendations were approved and put into effect by the Navy Department. The whole question before Captain Pratt, therefore, was how the delay could be justified. He testified that he would have acted more promptly had he had the authority. Before he succeeded Captain Chase in June, 1917, there had been long delays. After he became Assistant Chief of Naval Operations he attempted to expedite action. As soon as a request came from Sims he would prepare a reply, usually a favourable one, but often his reply would not be approved by Admiral Benson or Secretary Daniels. In the case of the request for battleships to reinforce the Grand Fleet no reply at all was sent, and for six months the ships were held back. In many other cases, cited by Pratt, Admiral Benson had

vainly endeavoured to secure the Secretary's approval or decision. As far as possible the Office of Operations acted without reference to the Secretary. But many matters had to be taken to him. Pratt did not know definitely why such matters were not promptly acted upon. The bare fact of delay he admitted freely and without reservation.

Captain Pratt also argued that, while such delays are regrettable, and indeed dangerous, in war time, in this particular war, they had no serious consequences, because the Allies were able to hold off the enemy until we were finally ready to get into action. Pratt would not admit that our naval delays lengthened the war a day, insisting that the duration of the war depended upon troop action on the Western Front. The Navy was only a part of the lines of communication, he said, and could not directly affect the duration of the war. Yet he admitted that without the defeat of the submarine campaign our intervention and the allied victory could not have come about; that the sending of troops was dependent on the defeat of the submarines; that our efforts largely contributed to putting down the submarines and keeping them down; and that to this extent our naval effort shortened the war. It seems difficult to understand why, if our naval intervention had been made effective earlier, it would not by the same means have brought an earlier victory.

X

Captain Pratt introduced in evidence many long documents prepared in the Navy Department to prove the activity of the Department in 1917. No less than 90 printed pages are devoted to the personal memoranda which he wrote between February, 1917, and April, 1918, on every phase of the naval situation.

Seventy-seven pages of his testimony are devoted to an interesting history of the Northern Mine Barrage, prepared

by the Bureau of Ordnance. This proved the incorrectness of Mr. Daniels' amazing assertions about Sims having delayed the Barrage.

Captain Pratt also introduced copies of a report he prepared as acting Chief of Operations on November 15, 1918, covering our operations in the war. In this he had assumed, without directly making the assertion, that the successful policies and methods ultimately adopted, had been put into force by the Navy Department immediately after war began. He said, for example:

"The present war had been going on for so long before we entered it that it was possible for the Department to make a fairly accurate estimate of the exact part we should take in it, were we called upon to enter the conflict. . . .

"Having definitely decided upon the character of the naval war, it became necessary to outline our general policy. Briefly speaking, the naval mission of the Allies was this: while maintaining command of the surface of the sea to make every effort to obtain control of the subsurface of the sea."

The memorandum went on to rewrite the whole story of the Department's activities, by reading back into the first months of the war in 1917 the policies and methods that were in reality not made effective until late in 1917 or in 1918. How complete a camouflage this report was, has been fully demonstrated by Admiral Sims, and was, in fact, the subject of a letter Sims wrote Pratt in January, 1919, a year before the naval investigations began. Pratt himself, in his testimony of 1920 — as the many quotations previously cited show — contradicted completely the impression conveyed by this memorandum of November 15, 1918.

XI

In his defence of the Department, Captain Pratt made many statements which, while true in themselves, were sus-

ceptible of interpretations radically at variance with the facts. Captain Pratt was careful to include qualifying clauses. The press did not always include these. The Secretary practically never did.

The following is an excellent illustration of the manner in which Captain Pratt resorted to camouflage: "Admiral Sims himself says that the Department did accept all of his plans and policies some six months after they were first made, but he does not seem to realize that they were the basis upon which *we* worked from the start. As to the adequateness of plans made ahead of time to cope with the particular situation which confronted us upon entry into the war, it can be said that the General Board had *in its files* many of them made in peace. *None fitted this particular case in war.* And none could ever meet the situation efficiently until Admiral Sims . . . could get in touch with the Admiralty and with the naval departments of the Allies and find out from them the real needs of the war.

"Today I can find nothing in the evidence presented which makes me change my mind as to the soundness, in the main, of the policies *indicated as the Department's policies.*"

These statements would appear to be a general vindication of the Navy Department and a repudiation of Sims' criticisms. A closer examination, however, shows that such is not the case. All that Pratt really meant by the above statement, was that he and the group of officers associated with him in the Office of Operations were from the first in entire sympathy with Sims' recommendations. They laid down policies to guide their own action which were later "*indicated as the Department's policies*" and, after some months of struggle, they succeeded in getting a better organization in the Department and in compelling action in accord with policies on which they and Sims were in general agreement. Pratt omits to say here what he repeatedly admitted in other parts of his testimony, i. e., that his views and the policies

followed by the Department, after the first six months of the war, were, in the beginning, the minority view even in the Office of Operations.

As late as June 7, 1917, Pratt wrote a forceful appeal for a modification of the building program to provide the kind of vessels needed in the war with Germany, rather than the kind that might be needed in some later war. This modification was not actually approved by the Department until late in July. In his letter of June 7, Pratt specifically said: "This view is not in accord with the general view of the office; but it is submitted as one view of what the policy should be."

After setting forth his reasons for urging that the Navy Department's activities in 1917 should take into consideration the existence of the state of war against Germany, Captain Pratt said:

"We did not enter this war alone. We have Allies and their efforts against the now common enemy have stood between us and possible aggressions for over two years. They have needs. Their needs are immediate and imperative. Their cause is our cause now. . . .

. . . . . .

"For the above reasons I am obliged to differ with the consensus of opinion expressed in the Office of Operations, and implied in the General Board's recommendations and do concur in the opinion and propositions (as to priority in new construction) expressed in General Goethals' letter of May 28, 1917."

Of course Captain Pratt was right. The officers who served with him in Operations and ultimately determined the Departmental policies, were perfectly sound in their ideas of what should be done. But they were in the minority in the beginning. Six months or more was lost while they were converting the Department to their point of view. But that is not an excuse for the existence of conditions that made their sound and correct views inoperative for the early

months of the war and that resulted in long delays and errors that, under less fortunate circumstances, would have been fatal.

There can be no question of the splendid work accomplished by Captain Pratt, Captain Schofield, Captain Laning, and other officers in the Navy Department. It is only to be regretted that Pratt in speaking of that work should have been tempted in his testimony in 1920 to quibble and to diminish the glory of their achievements in 1917 by attempting to camouflage the conditions he then knew so well and had then fought so valiantly to overcome.

XII

Captain Pratt had no doubt at all as to the real causes of the difficulties he encountered in attempting to prepare the Navy for war after war began. He pointed out to the committee in his direct statement, that the Navy cannot be efficient unless its administration is based on sound principles. Its organization was imperfect in 1917 and had to be remade amid the stress of war conditions. In fact Pratt said: "I think the organization is not fitted to conduct war efficiently." He believed that the Secretary's opposition to the establishment of a real naval staff was "a return to the older order of things which was not as wise." Pratt therefore placed the responsibility for the chaos of 1917, partly on Congress for having failed to provide an efficient organization for the Department; partly on the Secretary for his refusal previous to 1917 to carry out the expansion of the Office of Operations directed by Congress, and for his opposition to all preparedness measures.

In concluding his statement Pratt said:

"You have by law appointed a head, but have not definitely placed responsibility. As the head of an organization, there is the perfectly natural inclination to perform such acts as in his

judgment he deems wise, but upon these acts depends the entire present and future of our Naval Establishment, its development, maintenance, and operation. To efficiently effect this requires the most intimate knowledge of the Navy and the power to co-ordinate its many activities. As its development, maintenance, and operation are conducted, so fares the fate of the country's first line of defence.

"To administer the duties of chief executive of this department there is called a civilian. Gentleman, please do not misunderstand me. Under no circumstances should the supervisory head be other than a civilian, who in this capacity is best able to co-ordinate the Navy's activities with Congress, and who in his person is the strongest connecting link between us and the people. He comes to the office as an individual, a splendid man, able, efficient, highly trained in some subject, but not technically trained in the activities of the Navy nor a student of the art of war. This system functions after a fashion in peace, but it does not function when preparation for war becomes necessary, nor does it function in war. It is necessary that at the outbreak of hostilities the military head should assume the direction of and responsibility for the conduct of military operations, for whose preparation he has had, by law, no direct control nor authority to co-ordinate in peace. Such is the system we work under today and did at the outbreak of war. Thanks to the voluntary and hearty co-operation of every distinct departmental organization, including the Secretary, the Navy was able to pull itself together and to work exceedingly well in war.

"If any lack of preparation existed within the naval service prior to our entry into the war, if any lack of harmony existed then or exists now within our Navy, it can be laid more justly to the system of organization the department labours under than upon the shoulders of any individual."

CHAPTER XVII

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

(The Testimony of Admirals McKean and Benson)

I

THE last two naval witnesses who testified before the committee were Rear Admiral J. S. McKean, chief of the Matériel Section in the Office of Operations, and Admiral W. S. Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations during the war.

Their testimony was similar to that of Captain Pratt. Like that officer they freely admitted the facts stated by the Department's critics. They, too, sought to explain away the conditions that prevailed in 1917; by emphasizing the pacifism of the Administration; by showing that under the conditions that existed they had themselves done everything they could to get into the war quickly and effectively; and by referring to the inefficient departmental organization and to the personal characteristics of Mr. Daniels.

Admiral McKean was prone to occasional outbursts of ill-considered violence; as when he said that Admiral Sims' estimate of the results of the unpreparedness of 1917 and the delay in getting into the war was of the sort to be expected only from the "inflamed, exaggerated, diseased ego of a patient in St. Elizabeth's, the government hospital for the insane"; that this was "an insult to every officer and man in the Navy."

Admiral McKean was obviously hostile to Sims. His testimony indicated that he was almost equally hostile to the Secretary. He allowed his feeling against Sims to be exploited for headline purposes by Mr. Daniels, however, and reserved his description of the Secretary for the cross-examination which was hardly noticed at all.

McKean's testimony was devoted chiefly to the work of the Matériel Division of Operations from 1916 to 1918. He gave a complete account, with much documentary illustration, of his own recommendations and activities, though, as he freely admitted, many of his memoranda had not been approved by the Department, and consequently had not been made effective. In general it can be said that his testimony fully substantiated the statements of the departmental critics, and served merely to show the long continued and often unavailing efforts made by himself and other officers in Operations to get the Navy ready for war before April 6, 1917, and to get it into the war after that date.

II

In the first part of his statement, Admiral McKean said:

"From a study of the original letter on which this investigation is based, and from listening to the testimony given by various witnesses, I have arrived at the conclusion that this whole controversy can be reduced to two main issues.

"First, neglect of preparation before the United States went into the war; and, second, not putting the whole or not concentrating the whole efforts of the Navy Department and the fleet, ships, officers, and men on the anti-submarine menace in European waters, on April 6, 1917, on the declaration of war.

"As to the first charge, neglect of preparation, before the United States went into the war, this may be divided under three heads:

"(a) That there were no plans.

"(b) That the personnel was not ready.

"(c) That the material was not ready."

McKean then proceeded to take up each of these points in turn. He admitted the Navy Department had no real planning section before the war, that it had too few competent officers available to prepare any suitable plans, and that the General Board plans "were not detailed complete paper plans for the meeting of all possible conditions, because the trained personnel to work out the plans was not available, nor was the information."

In this connection McKean made it clear that the Secretary himself was responsible for the inefficient organization and for the absence of adequate machinery for the planning and conduct of war. In fact, McKean said that he himself in 1913 had told the Secretary how the Navy should be run, but that his advice had not been followed:

". . . In late May or early June, 1913, shortly after the present secretary came into office, he visited the Naval War College, Newport, R. I., and at a dinner he was, at his own request, literally swamped with advice in reference to his duties and opportunities by all officers present, among them Capt. W. S. Sims and myself, both at the time students at the college, and we contributed at least our share.

"After a long session at the table, we adjourned to the drawing room, and thus the Secretary had his first opportunity to face the whole of his numerous advisers; whereupon he said in substance: 'Gentlemen, you have given me a great quantity of valuable advice, which will take me a long time to digest. I have no doubt it is all good, but it is like a great deal of the advice given me by my official aides in Washington. It is not sufficiently concrete to put into immediate use. What I wish you would tell me is the first and most important single act which I can perform to most help the Navy.' Captain, now Rear Admiral Sims, immediately replied, 'What you want to do, Mr. Secretary, is to appoint a board.' I rudely interrupted Sims, with apologies, I hope, saying, 'Pardon me, Mr. Secretary, you do not want to appoint a board. The Navy Department cellars are full of boards' reports never acted upon. As I understand it, you wish to know now what single executive act of yours will do the most good to

the Navy. My recommendation is that you send a wire to the aide for operations, informing him that hereafter he, the aide for operations, will be your sole military adviser, and that his duties will be to co-ordinate the activities of the other aides, for personnel, material, and inspections, in the same way that they co-ordinate the activities of the various bureaus and divisions under each of them.'

" This recommendation met the approval of the officers present, but the Secretary demurred; said he could not do that without great consideration, as he feared he would be giving up too much of his authority and avoiding what should be his responsibilities. After some discussion in an attempt to show the Secretary that he was not giving up any authority and that he could not possibly avoid his responsibilities, this recommendation was passed over, and he asked what next we had to offer."

III

In regard to the second point, the unreadiness for war as far as personnel was concerned, Admiral McKean said:

" There is no question that we were short of both officers and men; the Navy personnel was too small for its job. . . . The shortage of enlisted personnel has been fully gone into. We were short; I believe the primary causes of incorrect recommendations of the then Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (Blue) were due to the use of that old delusion ' Peace complements for fighting ships ' . . . His estimates in 1914 were entirely wrong. I tried to convince him of it in his own office. . . . He defended it and believed in it at the time and I suppose he so advised the Secretary."

In McKean's opinion, the shortage of trained personnel in 1917, resulting from Secretary Daniels' refusal to request an increase in 1914, was the most serious part of our unpreparedness in 1917.

The material condition of the Navy in 1917 was also one of unpreparedness. Admiral McKean was quite emphatic about this:

"The material was not ready. This is the particular part that I am, through association and duty as assistant for material, most familiar with and most responsible for; and at the outset I will say that the fleet was not 100 per cent. ready, is not 100 per cent. ready now and never will be 100 per cent. ready at the outbreak of war.

"The navy yards were not 100 per cent. ready; they are not now, although the Atlantic coast yards are much better prepared than they have ever been before."

Admiral McKean then made a long outline of his own efforts between 1915 and 1917 to improve matériel conditions. He believed that much had been accomplished, although many of his plans had failed of approval. He pointed out that

"the old way was that Navy Yards grew, just like Topsy, and depended on local favour, etc., more than upon the demands of the fleet. The fleet was used to keep up the yards instead of the yards being used to keep up the fleet and that was not either economical or efficient.

". . . Very early in my duties my investigations confirmed my previous opinions acquired with the fleet that our shore establishments had not been developed as rapidly as the fleet had been built up, and that they were not capable of maintaining the fleet materially fit for war."

After the Office of Operations was organized in 1915, progress was made in getting a general plan for navy yard development, but very little had been definitely accomplished before 1917.

IV

Admiral McKean and Admiral Benson both had much to say of the achievements of the Office of Naval Operations before and during the war. Without the Office of Operations, they were convinced the situation would have been hopelessly chaotic in 1917. It was the existence of this co-ordinating agency, established against the opposition of the Secretary

of the Navy in 1915, that provided the nucleus around which a war organization could be built up.

They did not attempt, however, to show that everything possible had been done or that their efforts had been supported adequately by the Secretary. In concluding his introductory statement, indeed, McKean said:

"The preceding narrative is intended to show:

"First. That Operations was awake to the situation before the war and was doing its best within the appropriations to prepare the fleet for war, and to prepare the shore bases to maintain it in fighting trim during the war:

"Second. That even before we became a belligerent the difficulties and prices were increasing daily, making progress slow and getting us less for every dollar appropriated; and

"Third. That when funds became available practically without limit, the demands on the material and labour markets were such that new facilities had to be built up to provide the material, and that unskilled labour had to be trained by hundreds of thousands to perform jobs calling for high skill and long training.

"The above explains why it was impossible for the Navy Department or any other department to instantaneously, or even in what under normal conditions would be considered a reasonable time, meet the infinite numbers of demands made upon it."

Admiral McKean introduced a long list of documents to illustrate his effort to improve the material conditions of the Navy. Many of these, like many of Pratt's "plans," were simply his own memoranda containing recommendations which he admitted had not been carried into effect. On February 3, 1917, for example, McKean submitted a memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations outlining steps that should be taken to:

"(a) prepare all ships now built for war service at once.

"(b) complete new ships as rapidly as possible."

This memorandum contained seventeen definite recommendations as to what should be done to prepare for the im-

mediate possibility of war. No definite action was taken on this memorandum for, as McKean said, " suggestions came from different sources of what we should do to get ready for the war, and they were taken to the chief (Benson). The chief acted on them or took them up with the Secretary. I only cite these to show what we were thinking about and what we were trying to do and I want to say that I succeeded in getting most of them done in time. . . . I did have the support of my chief in this business and, within limits, also of the Secretary."

McKean had found it very difficult in many cases to get any decision. During the cross-examination he stated that the Secretary

" was always thinking about justifying himself before your committees up here and until you could convince him of the military necessity absolutely and beyond question, and also that he could justify the expenditure before Congress, you would not get him to approve an expenditure of any large amount; and I often had to present the same subject many times before I got a favourable decision. I never had the Secretary refuse to listen to my arguments. I always tried to get a little new point of view on it and present it in a different light, and sometimes I thought I had proven the case beyond question a dozen times, and then I would try it the thirteenth and I would get it."

V

Admiral Benson, unlike the other witnesses who testified, had prepared no statement. He said:

" I have intentionally avoided preparing a studied statement. I have attempted to keep my mind as free as possible from any of the influences that might have been produced by hindsight. . . . I tried to keep my mind unprejudiced by any subsequent study of the problems and my memory is quite clear in regard to the main principles. . . . I feel that I should make this state-

ment, that as the naval adviser to the Secretary of the Navy, I was responsible for the naval operations of the war."

Admiral Benson's unwilling confirmation of the Navy's unpreparedness for war has been already noted. He gave the committee plain statements of conditions as he remembered them. He did not feel that he had been at fault. He believed that the Navy had done exceedingly well in the war. He felt deeply grieved that Admiral Sims had criticized the Department's activities. Though he did not deny the facts as stated by Sims or other witnesses, he too endeavoured to explain them away, to show that our delays and our unpreparedness had had no serious results.

He felt very strongly that the whole responsibility for our naval operations had rested on him and on him alone. While he had endeavoured to aid the Allies, he had always kept in mind first of all America's own interests. If he had delayed sending forces in 1917, it was because he felt that American interests had to be protected even at the cost of Allied losses. He had delayed decisions in many matters until he had had time to make up his own mind fully as to what should be done. He felt that the decisions were of such great importance that great caution had to be exercised in approving any recommendation from abroad. While he had been willing to assist in the execution of any plans the Allies had, he had insisted before giving his approval on having all possible information. He had recognized the seriousness of the situation in 1917, but did not believe that it was as critical as Admiral Sims had represented it to be. He felt that Sims had been perhaps unconsciously influenced by English ideas and consequently had used his own discretion in deciding whether Sims' recommendations should be approved or not. After he had gone abroad in November, 1917, he had been more impressed with the necessity for action and had taken immediate steps to provide for a more complete co-operation with the Allies by sending additional

forces abroad, in the creation of an Allied Naval Council and in the formation of a planning division in London.

Admiral Benson felt that much of the responsibility for conditions fell upon him and displayed a generous disposition to accept the onus of any errors. He felt at least partially responsible for the unpreparedness in 1917, as he might have urged upon the Secretary more strongly, in the two previous years, the necessity of preparedness.

VI

Admiral Benson testified that: "even before the war started in 1914," he felt that "sooner or later we would have to fight Germany." After 1914 "I felt as firmly as I could that we would have to fight Germany." He did not believe that neutrality barred us from preparing for war between 1914 and 1917. The torpedoing of the *Lusitania* did not seem to him an occasion for any especial preparations against Germany. From his "professional standpoint" he would have had the Navy prepared for war at all times, but not from the attitude of mind of the people of the United States.

"*The Chairman:* From the standpoint of the people of the United States, when did you first feel that you were justified in preparing for war.

"*Admiral Benson:* I think about the time Congress decided to declare war.

"*The Chairman:* April 6, 1917?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes."

As an indication of how thoroughly the Secretary had suppressed Admiral Fiske and nullified his efforts to increase the efficiency of the Navy, Admiral Benson's description of the situation he found in 1915, is of great interest.

"I assumed office on the 11th of May, 1915. I found absolutely nothing in my office that was of any service to me. Even

the office into which I came was not in proper condition for an officer of my rank and the position I held. All there was to it was a room in the Navy Department and one or two small rooms outside for clerical help. . . . Of course the General Board had been functioning . . . and the general plans for war that had been worked out by the General Board existed and certain studies had been made as regards communications. . . . That is practically all I found in the way of preparation."

Admiral Fiske, as aide for operations, had had no independent authority, such as Benson, as Chief of Naval Operations, had been given by act of Congress. Fiske had therefore been unable to do anything save by action of the Secretary.

Admiral Benson described in a general way his activities from 1915 to 1917. In May, 1915, he had obtained the Secretary's approval of the administrative plan, which Mr. Daniels had refused to approve for two years, or since March, 1913. Later a new fleet organization was carried through. Naval communications were organized and centralized. A Board of Inspections made a study of merchant vessels that might be needed as auxiliaries in war. General development plans were prepared for navy yard improvements. Extra supplies of torpedoes, projectiles and powder were laid in.

All these measures Benson had carried through as steps in preparing for the possibility of war with Germany. He repeated his professional belief that "the function of the Navy is to keep prepared for war as nearly as possible, at all times," but stated that the attitude of the people made any special steps to prepare for a war with Germany impossible until April 6, 1917.

Mr. Daniels' objection to discussing the possibility of war or preparedness was also unwillingly confirmed by Admiral Benson.

"*The Chairman:* You repeatedly informed the Secretary of your professional belief that we would get into the war?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not know that I would put it that way; whether I did or not. That is a question that I could not answer positively.

"*The Chairman:* Your relations with the Secretary were very close were they not?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes, sir.

"*The Chairman:* If you had this professional belief about our getting into the war, is it not probable that you would have made it manifest on numerous occasions?

"*Admiral Benson:* Oh, I think I did. That is my belief that I did.

"*The Chairman:* Did you advise the Secretary to prepare for war?

"*Admiral Benson:* Well, I must have done it, Mr. Chairman. Just at what time and in what way, it would be difficult for me to answer that question. I felt it strongly, and I felt my responsibilities and my duties, but just to what extent I expressed them, it is impossible for me to say now. From time to time I did the duty that came to me; I realized that I was responsible for the situation and did everything that I felt it was my duty to do with reference to it. I can not answer your question in any more detail than that.

"*The Chairman:* You do not recall especially advising the Secretary to prepare for war?

"*Admiral Benson:* No; I do not.

"*The Chairman:* At any time?

"*Admiral Benson:* No; I do not."

VII

Admiral Benson clearly stated this refusal of the Secretary to take any interest in the Navy's readiness for war, and his opposition to the efforts of naval officers.

"*The Chairman:* Could you have prepared the Navy for war without the consent of the Secretary of the Navy?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, sir.

"*The Chairman:* . . . Did the Secretary ever give you any definite instructions with regard to active preparations for war,

in regard to personnel, material or organization, prior to the declaration of war?

"*Admiral Benson:* Not as a definite preparation for war; I do not think he did. I cannot recollect his having done so.

"*The Chairman:* Did he ever hold you up or delay you in any way when you were seeking to make such preparation?

"*Admiral Benson:* Well, it depends upon how far you mean. I think this: I think that the Secretary was very careful to go over the recommendations that were made to him, and that he gave very careful consideration to matters pertaining to any increases in expenditures and things that might involve unusual outlay, and there were delays in that way; but I do not think there was anything I could state definitely as a hold up, *except that there were many things that I felt as a naval officer that we ought to do; that he felt as a politician we ought not to do.* But in what we had, with the facilities we had, I do not think that he ever interfered with getting them ready as far as we could, for war."

Then Admiral Benson proceeded to enumerate a number of things he thought should have been done, that the Secretary would not approve; such as the manning and preparation of vessels in reserve "so that in case of war we could not only have manned the ships in reserve at once, but the auxiliary vessels and things of that kind."

When the Chairman asked at what time the Secretary first had "the idea that we would be brought into the war," Admiral Benson replied:

"I can only answer in this way: I do not know whether the Secretary thought we would be drawn into the war before war was declared or not."

"*The Chairman:* There was nothing that indicated to you that he did think so up to that time?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, sir. Not to the best of my recollection.

"*The Chairman:* If you had been ordered and permitted to

begin preparations for war after May, 1915, would not the Navy have been better prepared than it was in April, 1917?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes, sir."

Then Benson admitted, as quoted in Chapter XV, that in April, 1917, the Navy was not prepared for war; that from his point of view Daniels' statement that it was "ready from stem to stern" was not justified; that its personnel was inadequate; that the ships were not all ready for war; that they were not fully manned; that the Navy was not mobilized; that the fleet was wholly inadequate and lacked the necessary scouting and screening vessels to accompany it; that our fleet could not have met the German fleet with any hope of victory. In fact, Admiral Benson admitted that any officer "who would have informed the Department that our battle fleet in 1917 was in a condition to meet the German fleet on a footing of equality would have been lacking in his duty."

The condition of total unpreparedness thus revealed was not due to naval officers but to the refusal of the Secretary to heed their advice. Admiral Benson said that the steps necessary for preparedness had been submitted but

"they have never been fully complied with. The reason in my opinion is this, that the officers in the service, who are educated by the government for this special purpose and for no other purpose, have never been permitted to exercise fully the responsibilities, as I see them, that should be placed upon them. They study these questions; they prepare what they believe is necessary for proper preparation of the nation's navy for war, and those recommendations have never been fully carried out."

Admiral Benson felt that he partially shared the responsibility for the condition of the Navy in 1917 with the Secretary, as he might have urged more strongly the necessity for preparedness. The final responsibility, however, rested solely upon the Secretary. "Of course, the Secretary is ultimately responsible for everything." . . .

Previous to April, 1917, no special or "unusual" effort had been made to prepare the Navy for war. Although a large building program was authorized in 1916, no special effort had been made to get the ships built.

After the battle of Jutland it was apparent to Benson that Germany "relied largely upon the submarine campaign to win the war by starving England and France." He felt that we would enter the war on the side of the Allies, but no effort was made to increase the number of anti-submarine craft before March, 1917. This was because the election of 1916 seemed to indicate that the people "did not want war and did not expect it."

The campaign cry, "He kept us out of war," was therefore the keynote to the Navy Department policy. Daniels loyally kept the Navy from getting ready for war and allowed its ships to remain undermanned and in poor material condition, at a time when practically every officer in the service felt that war was inevitable.

VIII

Even after we entered the war, the first aim of the Navy Department was not the defeat of Germany and victory of the Allies. Admiral Benson admitted that for many months the Department was concerned primarily with defensive questions; the protection of the Atlantic coast against submarine attacks; the protection of American merchant ships; the maintenance of our fleet intact to meet some hypothetical future emergency. No clearer statement of our failure to support the Allies wholeheartedly from the beginning of the war than is contained in Admiral Benson's own admissions could be made:

"After war was declared," said Benson, "I felt very strongly that we were in danger of attack by submarines — the only way he could attack us."

He believed that as many as half a dozen might appear on the Atlantic coast and although he admitted that we would have had full information of their coming, he felt " at the outbreak of war that the first thing for us to do was to protect ourselves against this attack by German submarines." . . .

" *The Chairman:* That, first, we should keep our coasts and interests safe, and, second, help out on the other side?

" *Admiral Benson:* I felt it would be this way — that we should be first able to protect our own coasts and then do everything we could to help them on the other side."

Admiral Benson told the chairman that " as a principle " he believed in offensive warfare, but in describing the agreement with allied officers on April 10th and 11th, 1917, he admitted that the policy we actually followed in the first months of the war was purely defensive.

" *The Chairman:* Then you do not think it would have been strategically wise to assume the offensive?

" *Admiral Benson:* Not under those conditions, no, sir. I think we did what was exactly the right thing to do at the time with what we had. As a principle in warfare, I believe in active offensive warfare. *This was not altogether our war.* The Allies had been in it some years and they had, or should have had very definite policies and plans upon which they were conducting war and we were going in to join them and I do not think we made any mistake at the time. I think we did exactly the right thing under the circumstances."

The Chief of Naval Operations during the war thus confirmed absolutely Admiral Sims' two main contentions; first, that our Navy was not prepared for war; second, that we failed to co-operate wholeheartedly with the Allies from the beginning, and lost many months before getting our effective forces into the war zone.

It should not be forgotten that Admiral Benson testified

that "*This was not altogether our war.*" There is a current impression in the United States that it was very much our war. Apparently the chief figures in the National Administration did not think so.

IX

The "safety first" policy was repeatedly mentioned by Admiral Benson. He had been the chief naval adviser of Secretary Daniels. It can at least be presumed therefore that he knew something of the leading policies of the Department. A further quotation may serve to illuminate even more these policies.

The chairman read a quotation from Mahan.

"One clear idea should be observed first by every one who recognizes that war is still a possibility and desires to see his country ready. However defensive in origin or character a war may be, the assumption of a simple defensive in war is ruin. War, once declared, must be waged offensively and aggressively. The enemy must not be fended off but smitten down."

"*The Chairman:* Do you agree with the general principle expressed?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do agree with the general principle.

"*The Chairman:* Do you think then that waiting until we were advised just what ships or men were needed on the other side was a very aggressive policy for us to follow?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not think it was aggressive, but I think *it was in absolute keeping with the actual conditions which confronted the country.*

. . . . . .

"*The Chairman:* Do you feel that Admiral Sims' recommendation about the battleships was acted upon at once?

"*Admiral Benson:* . . . No, it was not. That was another case in which I had the responsibility and I assumed it, and I acted on my own judgment in the matter and I felt that the responsibility resting on me for our own national defence was first. That it was my duty to safeguard American interests. That was

my first duty, regardless of any other duty, of humanity or anything else, and that was always the underlying motive in all the actions that I took. . . .

"It has been referred to, and taken as a matter of fact, that when I went over there I realized the necessity of sending them over and immediately did it, implying that my judgment had been wrong in the beginning. That is not the case. In my position it was necessary for me to view the world situation; not only what was going on at the time but what might take place after the war was over, and I had in view the possibilities that might come after the war; the condition that our Navy might be left in, etc., and I did not feel that I would be warranted in leaving our Navy in such a position that it could not look out for America's interests, unless the situation over there was very desperate.

"Another thing, I always had this in mind. We were gradually getting our troops into France, and if a forced peace had been brought on, or if a complete defeat of the Allies had been accomplished, and our troops had been left in France and we had not sufficient naval force to protect their return to America, that would be unpardonable in me, as the responsible naval authority, to allow such a condition to arise. . . .

"It was only when I went to London and had close and intimate conferences with the British Admiralty, in which I advanced my views and my reasons, and with which they — as I recall it — were heartily in sympathy that I agreed to let them come over. It was for that reason, determinedly, that I did not send them over in the beginning. To begin with, I said that I would not, under any circumstances, send them until I got a statement from them that they thought it was necessary."

X

No more accurate statement of the "safety first" defensive policies of the Department in the early months of 1917 could be imagined than this testimony of Benson's. Our forces, instead of being advanced to the war zone, where they would have made impossible an allied defeat, were to be held back so that if and when the Allies were defeated

we could withdraw gracefully and leave the Allies to their fate.

The chairman wanted further information on this point, and asked:

"How would a forced peace have been brought about?

"*Admiral Benson:* That I do not know.

"*The Chairman:* By the defeat of the Allies?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not know. Suppose the British fleet had been defeated?

"*The Chairman:* I do not think there was very much chance of that, was there, after we entered the war?

"*Admiral Benson:* There was *in my mind* the possibility of it; and it was that possibility I had to face. I was the responsible party and I appreciated the responsibility very clearly.

"*The Chairman:* But it was not enough, in your mind, to justify you in sending additional ships over so that the Allies should not be defeated, was it?

"*Admiral Benson:* Later on, when I had assurances, I was willing to do it; but *not until I had personally investigated.* I did not have sufficient confidence in Admiral Sims' judgment and in his decisions to warrant me in relieving myself of that grave responsibility; and, in saying that, I do not want to reflect on Admiral Sims' judgment, but I mean to say that I was the responsible head, and mine was the responsibility, that I could not pass to anybody else until I had investigated and satisfied myself of it."

Admiral Benson had not believed, however, that there was any danger of allied defeat through the success of the submarine warfare. He considered the submarine situation "a very serious matter" but not "a very critical matter." He said:

"In my professional opinion, I do not believe they ever would have been able to have forced a peace by the action of the submarine.

"*The Chairman:* Were you not at least alarmed when you

found that they were sinking 800,000 tons of shipping in April, 1917?

"*Admiral Benson:* I was alarmed because the situation was a very serious one.

"*The Chairman:* But not critical?

"*Admiral Benson:* I said that it was critical, but not very critical. I do not say that it was very critical.

. . . . . .

"*The Chairman:* Was that the attitude of the Secretary?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not know what the attitude of the Secretary was.

"*The Chairman:* You do not?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not.

"*The Chairman:* I take it you were in conference with him on such matters?

"*Admiral Benson:* That may all be, sir; but I could not state to you what the Secretary's attitude was."

This is an utterance of our war Chief of Naval Operations, probably unprecedented in the history of warfare. He was totally ignorant of Mr. Daniels' attitude toward the war situation in 1917!

Admiral Benson admitted that Ambassador Page, Mr. Hoover and Admiral Sims had all urged upon the Government the fact, that — as Mr. Hoover expressed it —" the situation was dangerous almost beyond description and the anxiety in the whole of that period was terrific. I cannot overestimate the critical character of that position and the dangers in which the allied cause rested." Yet Benson continued to insist that the situation in 1917 was not really " very critical! "

Refusing, in his mental blindness, even in 1920, after all the facts were known, to believe that the Allies had really needed our help very much, Admiral Benson's attitude in 1917 may be readily imagined. It is not surprising, therefore, that he insisted, in the early months of the war on " safety first."

XI

On the following day, when Senator Pittman was attempting to get Admiral Benson to qualify his extremely damaging admissions about naval conditions in 1917, the Admiral gave an even more complete statement of this "safety first" policy.

"*Senator Pittman:* If we had sent our fighting ships immediately to the war zone, they would have been placed in danger of destruction immediately, would they not?

"*Admiral Benson:* They would while in the submarine zone; certainly.

"*Senator Pittman:* The loss of every one of our major ships during this war would have weakened our permanent navy, would it not?

"*Admiral Benson:* It would.

"*Senator Pittman:* The General Board, as had you, as Chief of Naval Operations, had those things in mind, did it not?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes.

"*Senator Pittman:* And, as you testified, your first thought was for the protection of our own coast and the preservation of our Navy?

"*Admiral Benson:* Absolutely, sir."

"*Senator Pittman:* I want to ask you whether or not you agree, with what all agree to be Admiral Sims' position, that we should have sent over immediately, on the beginning of war, all our available craft to the other side?

"*Admiral Benson:* I do not think we should, sir, for the reasons I have already stated. *I did not think so at the time and I do not think so now; and as I have repeatedly stated mine was the responsibility;* I had to exercise my judgment; and my first thought in the beginning, during and always was *to see that our coasts and our own vessels and our own interests were safeguarded.* When I was satisfied that that was done as far as I could, with what we had, then to give everything we had and to do everything we possibly could for the common cause."

The Chairman called Benson's attention to the recommendations from London to the effect that all forces should be sent abroad, as no submarine activities were probable in American waters save for sporadic and ineffective raids.

Admiral Benson replied:

"You always have one choice out of two, Mr. Chairman, to be right. When you make a prediction you are either right or wrong. But I had to act on my judgment; I could not take chances; I had to view the situation and act according to my judgment; and *my inclination,* and my duty, as I saw it, was to safeguard American interests, and I did that, and whether I was right or wrong, I should do the same thing again.

"*The Chairman:* But you think it was more important to keep them away from this coast than it was to go over and put down the menace on the other side?

"*Admiral Benson:* If we could have been sure that we could prevent them coming over here, and made it impossible for them to come, then of course that would have been the right thing to do."

In considering the absolutely contradictory statements, made immediately afterwards by Secretary Daniels, Admiral Benson's testimony is of the greatest importance. Admiral Benson is an honest, straightforward gentleman. He would not stoop to lie, nor to make wild assertions to distract attention from the Department's errors. Firmly and flatly he gave the evidence quoted above. The policy of the Department in the war was not aggressive, it was not primarily one of co-operation with the Allies. The Department was actuated by personal "inclinations," and by purely defensive considerations, rather than with the defeat of the Germans and with giving assistance to the Allies.

XII

Thus far, it has been demonstrated from Admiral Benson's testimony alone, first, that we entered the war without plans,

with our vessels unready and with inadequate personnel; second, that, for at least the first six months of the war, i.e., until Admiral Benson's visit to London, we held back forces from the Allies, delayed action on recommendations at the most critical phase of the war, and followed a safety first policy rather than one of full co-operation with the Allies.

Admiral Benson demonstrated equally forcibly, by his testimony, that fundamental military principles were repeatedly violated, that Admiral Sims was not supported, that no definition of authority was ever made and no satisfactory principle of command ever recognized.

His testimony is full of indications of his attitude of mind on these points. For instance:

"*The Chairman:* Do you think that all the available anti-submarine craft were sent to Europe as soon as they could have been sent?

"*Admiral Benson:* Strictly speaking, I think they were. *There were a great many that we had use for over here,* but I think as fast as we could get them ready, and, *in my judgment, could be spared,* they were sent. . . ."

"*The Chairman:* But you do not feel that if all vessels had been ready when war broke out, that that would have been the case, do you?

"*Admiral Benson:* We might have sent more destroyers — a few more — but *I doubt if I would have sent more destroyers, because I felt strongly the necessity of safeguarding the battleships.* . . ."

"*The Chairman:* But you could have sent gunboats.

"*Admiral Benson:* A very few, sir . . several that we had, if they had been ready, could have been sent over. . . .

"*The Chairman:* Can you tell me, if these vessels were not ready, why they were not ready?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, sir; I could not go into that now, I do not think."

In succeeding testimony Admiral Benson explained that tugs were not sent abroad to comply with the requests of

Admiral Sims and the Allies, as they were needed on the Atlantic coast.

The convoy system was not accepted for many weeks, said Admiral Benson. "There was some delay, yes, and there was some difference of opinion. That was a very important question to decide . . . *and I still have some doubt in my mind about it.* We did eventually do it because the weight of opinion was decidedly in favour of it, and that was possibly one reason why we delayed it."

"*The Chairman:* And do you feel that the adoption of the convoy system was a mistake?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, I do not think it was a mistake; but I say it is a question in my mind still whether they — of course the convoy as carried out was very successful, but when you are dealing with questions of that kind, technical questions, technical men differ in their viewpoints."

"*The Chairman:* You feel that the recommendations to adopt it, in view of the fact that you did adopt it later on, were justified, do you not?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes; I will admit that they were justified; but I do not admit that the Navy Department, or that I, as the technical head of it, would have been justified in adopting that or any other recommendation of such vast importance, simply on the recommendation of Admiral Sims, or anybody else, without due consideration.

"*The Chairman:* Even if they were in great need of ships at a very critical time?

"*Admiral Benson:* Even if the recommendations were absolutely perfect, we would not have been justified in doing it."

So the Chief of Naval Operations explained the delay that averaged from four to six months, in acting on every essential recommendation made by Admiral Sims in the first most critical months of the war. "Deliberation" is too often an excellent camouflage for lack of plans, ideas, energy, and for the absence of the will to victory!

XIII

It is a curious conception of warfare that insists on the kind of defence that lets the enemy pick out his place to hit you and gives him entire freedom to land his blow, rather than on the offensive, which prevents the enemy from striking at all. It is a no less curious circumstance that in war, when time is vital, the one thing that may not be wasted with impunity, the head of a navy should have kept that navy away from the front while he spent months deliberating.

Yet that was Benson's conception of war, as revealed in his testimony. Needless to say, he was not a graduate of the Naval War College. He had heard of Mahan's principles of naval warfare, but considered them only vague generalities of no real application in time of war. Benson's conception of the principles of command were equally naïve. He was the responsible head of the Navy. Therefore all naval operations had to be directed by him. Even the forces in Europe were operated by his orders from Washington, or at least so he declared to the committee, in the following words:

"I felt and still feel that Admiral Sims' interpretation of his mission was not in accord with the mission that the Department intended him to perform or fulfill.

". . . I feel that as Chief of Naval Operations I was responsible for the policies carried out in all parts of the world, in Europe as well as elsewhere, and I looked upon Admiral Sims simply as my representative to carry out those policies in European waters. . . .

". . . The forces (in Europe) were being operated in a manner very similar to the way in which they were being operated by my orders from Washington.

"*The Chairman:* Was not Admiral Sims commander-in-chief of the forces on the other side?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, sir; he was not.

"*The Chairman:* At any time?

"*Admiral Benson:* No, sir.

"*The Chairman:* Who was?

"*Admiral Benson:* The Commander-in-Chief was Admiral Mayo, then the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet. . . .

"*The Chairman:* Did he give orders direct to Sims?

"*Admiral Benson:* Just what orders he gave I do not know, but the situation was such that the orders were given directly from Washington to Admiral Sims by me, and as far as we could I kept Admiral Mayo informed of those orders. . . .

"*The Chairman:* Is it not true that Admiral Sims did not take his orders from Admiral Mayo?

"*Admiral Benson:* He would have to take any orders that Admiral Mayo gave him, sir.

"*The Chairman:* But Admiral Mayo gave him practically no orders during the war.

"*Admiral Benson:* I doubt if he gave him many orders. As I say, the situation was a peculiar one, like this whole war was a peculiar one and we had to meet the situation that confronted us."

Admiral Benson went on to say that Admiral Sims was the "Commander" but not the "Commander-in-Chief" of the forces abroad. All forces sent over were directly under Sims and all subordinate commanders, such as Wilson at Brest, Niblack at Gibraltar, Strauss and Rodman in the North Sea, reported only through Admiral Sims. He was their immediate superior, the senior naval officer in European waters, but decidedly, insisted Benson, not the "Commander-in-Chief" abroad. The quibble over the "in-Chief" part of his title seems to indicate only that Benson believed that he himself was really the commander-in-chief of the forces abroad. In fact he practically said as much.

"*The Chairman:* I assume that the allied authorities supposed that when they were dealing with Admiral Sims they were dealing with an authorized representative of the American nation, did they not?

"*Admiral Benson:* I think that they understood perfectly

well what Admiral Sims' position was, sir. I think, as I said just now, that there is an exaggerated idea as to the position that Admiral Sims occupied. *I think the Allies understood that the operations in Europe were being directed from Washington.*"

XIV

Throughout the war, Sims was left in London with no definite understanding of what his position really was. Much of the difficulty that arose in connection with the conduct of the war was due to this failure of the Department to heed one of the most elementary principles of war, the delegation of authority and the definition of command. Even the witnesses before the committee in 1920 expressed very different conceptions of Sims' position and responsibilities.

Still Admiral Benson did not see that any further instructions were required. His reason for such a view is simple. He, as Chief of Naval Operations, was the responsible head. "I was the one who determined on the policies to be carried out and gave them to my subordinates. I hope the impression has not been made here . . . that there was ever any question as to who was at the head of Operations. . . ."

". . . I would like to state here if I may, Mr. Chairman, that points have been brought into this discussion in regard to the principles of Mahan. . . . Of course Mahan was writing general principles for ordinary war. . . . But this war was a very unusual one, the conditions were very unusual."

So Mahan was put on the shelf and Daniels and Benson ruled supreme!

Indeed, as Benson admitted himself, with a certain unconscious sense of superiority,

"I am not what you would call a graduate of the War College. . . . I do not pose as a theoretical War College officer. I am simply a plain sailor and practical naval officer."

XV

The final point to be considered, in reviewing Admiral Benson's testimony, is his hostility to the ideas that came from across the Atlantic. Repeatedly he insisted that no suggestion of Admiral Sims could be accepted until after the most mature deliberation.

This attitude came out sharply when Benson was questioned as to the causes for the long delay of the Navy Department in adopting the convoy system.

When Admiral Sims' message of May 1st, 1917, urging the Navy Department to co-operate in establishing the convoy system was read by Senator Hale to Benson, his animosities exploded and he said:

"We received that message. I would like at this time to invite the attention of the committee . . . to this fact. . . . That message clearly indicates that Admiral Sims got all of his information and his ideas as to what should be done from the British Admiralty, and as I stated before, he simply transmitted them to the Navy Department.

"*The Chairman:* I think the British Admiralty consulted with him in making up all his plans . . . did they not?

"*Admiral Benson:* I think he consulted with them and got their ideas, sir.

"*The Chairman:* That makes it all the more authoritative, does it not?

"*Admiral Benson:* Coming from the British Admiralty?

"*The Chairman:* Coming directly from the British Admiralty through Admiral Sims?

"*Admiral Benson:* Yes, but I want to emphasize the fact that Admiral Sims was simply the means of the information that came to us from the British, except what we got from other sources."

. . . . . .

"*The Chairman:* . . . I should think that it might be of some

value to us to get the results they had reached after watching the operation of the submarines; was it not, Admiral?

"*Admiral Benson:* It was of value; . . . But, as I said yesterday, . . . it was a very serious policy to be adopted, and I do not think any right minded American could settle down quietly and *accept his instructions practically from the British Admiralty.* I, for one, am not willing to do it.

"*The Chairman:* But were not the plans for adopting the convoy system based largely on our co-operation with them?

"*Admiral Benson:* I so understand from the message."

In this statement of Admiral Benson of his unwillingness to adopt the convoy system, because he believed the suggestion came from the British, lies much of the real reason for his long delays in acting on Admiral Sims' recommendations in 1917.

As a matter of fact, the Admiralty were persuaded to take up the convoy system largely by Sims' own efforts. His recommendations to the Navy Department were not at all mere repetitions of ideas he had picked up from the British, nor were they "instructions" from the British. The facts upon which these recommendations were based the Allies, of course, supplied. The recommendations themselves represented conclusions reached after careful discussion and full agreement with the Allies. More often than not the idea concerned had been supplied by Sims himself.

The attitude of the Navy Department, however, as expressed above by Benson, made it infinitely more difficult, at least in the early months of war, to get the Navy Department to act, than to get all the Allies to agree. There was in the Department a surprising insularity and a deep-rooted prejudice against the Allies, which made co-operation in the early months very difficult. Admiral Sims was left without a staff, his recommendations were ignored; our Navy Department held back its forces in the most critical months of the war. All this Benson freely admitted.

This constituted Admiral Sims' chief criticisms of the actual conduct of the war by the Department. His points were fully substantiated by the testimony given under oath by Admiral Benson.

CHAPTER XVIII

MR. DANIELS' SMOKE-SCREEN TACTICS

I

ON May 9, 1920, the naval investigation entered upon a new phase. On that day the Secretary of the Navy appeared before the Senate sub-committee to begin his testimony.

Mr. Daniels, unlike the previous witnesses, did not hesitate to deny flatly and vehemently all the criticisms that had been made. He even went so far as to continue to maintain that, in 1917, " the Navy had been made ready from stem to stern to the fullest extent possible for any eventuality."

It should be borne in mind that Secretary Daniels, like all the other witnesses, took an oath to tell the truth. Any variations from fact to be noted in his testimony cannot therefore be excused as " journalistic expressions."

II

The general outline of the Secretary's plan of defence has already been stated. These may be briefly recapitulated. The methods of Mr. Daniels were those of diversion, evasion, and misrepresentation.

Most of his testimony was designed to divert attention from the real issues, raised by Admiral Sims' letter and by his testimony. This diversion took various forms. The actual achievements of the Navy were recited at length. Extraneous issues were raised, by attacks on Admiral Sims and other witnesses and by criticisms of the allied powers.

All the really critical points were evaded. The Secretary merely made a general denial, without substantiating this denial. He made no attempt to disprove the testimony of practically every naval witness, but dismissed all critical testimony by asserting that it was inspired by grievances.

In many important matters, the Secretary made statements which were so phrased as to give an entirely false impression and to misrepresent the facts, while skilfully avoiding such actual misstatements as would constitute perjury. Such were his accusations against Admiral Sims; his explanation of the delay in adopting the convoy; his explanation of the "new, bold and audacious policies" of the Navy Department; and particularly his discussion of the Northern Mine Barrage and of the question of troop protection.

In some notable instances, especially during the cross-examination, when taken off his guard, Mr. Daniels, in his anger and chagrin, blurted out statements, at variance with fact and with the previous sworn testimony.

III

Mr. Daniels' testimony in but few instances dealt specifically with the vital points at issue. He stated that all the criticisms of Admiral Sims and "other officers with a grievance" had been fully disproved by the testimony of ten admirals. He made much of this point, apparently for the benefit of the press. The ten admirals to whose testimony he referred were Admirals Mayo, Plunkett, Badger, Fletcher, Niblack, Strauss, Rodman, Wilson, McKean and Benson. Of these, four — Niblack, Strauss, Rodman, and Wilson — had served abroad in subordinate commands during the war and admitted that they knew little or nothing of the facts at issue. Badger, McKean and Benson, under cross-examination, admitted that the facts were as stated by Admiral Sims and the other critics of the administration. Mayo

and Plunkett fully supported every important "charge" against the Department. Mr. Daniels either did not know or understand what they had said in their testimony, or was misrepresenting their statements.

IV

On May 23rd, 1920, Admiral Sims during his final testimony made a summary of the character and content of Mr. Daniels' statement which can hardly be excelled for its clearness and precision.

"In reviewing the lengthy statement of the Secretary of the Navy," said Admiral Sims, "the general outline of his method of defending the conduct of the Department, during the early months of the war becomes perfectly clear. As in the case of the other witnesses who appeared for the Department, nine-tenths of the material that he introduced had no bearing on the questions before this Committee. The reading of such a statement is inclined to confuse these issues, rather than to meet them. Large masses of documents have been introduced, stressing the navy's achievements; giving a lengthy history of the activities of the Navy Department since 1913, and even before; and introducing extraneous matter which has no bearing whatsoever on the investigation. They seem to be designed solely to serve as the basis of reflections or attacks upon myself. In the few instances in which the Secretary attempted to answer specific criticisms, his testimony is based upon remarkable misconceptions and misinterpretations of fact.

"In taking up the Secretary's testimony, I shall deal with it under six main heads:

"1st. The Secretary has dealt voluminously with the Navy's achievements during the war. This stressing of the Navy Department's successes naturally tends to gloss over its failures and withdraw attention from the latter by arousing enthusiasm over the former.

"2nd. He has reviewed at length the acts of his administration and has bestowed unrestrained praise upon these acts. He

has gone into great detail in pointing out the achievements of the Navy during his administration, and in calling attention to the expansion of the naval service in the last seven years. However meritorious these things may be, it is obvious that they too have no bearing upon the issues, except once again to withdraw attention from failures by putting the emphasis upon obvious successes.

"3rd. The Secretary has attempted to meet certain of my criticisms. He has repeated the contentions of some of the Department's witnesses. For example, that plans for all possible emergencies were in existence; that the Navy had never been so well prepared; and that no department of any government had ever been so well administered as the Navy Department during the war. He has based this contention upon the assertion that my criticisms had been completely refuted by the witnesses called by the Department. He had apparently failed to read the testimony of these same admirals, or he would have noted the rather curious fact that, whereas the witnesses called seemed in many cases quite willing to state in general terms, subject to different interpretations, that the Navy was all right, had always been all right, and would always be all right, they had yet in every case, where they had any intimate knowledge of detailed facts, or of the specific issues under investigation, almost invariably confirmed my criticisms.

"4th. The Secretary has attacked the whole policy followed by the Allies in the conduct of the war upon the sea, apparently believing that this demonstrated the infallibility of the Navy Department. He has referred enthusiastically to the bold and audacious policy that inspired the Department, and to his own inability to persuade the professional heads of the Allied Navies to adopt his interpretation of such policies. He has evidently introduced this contention in the belief that the test of a war policy is not its effectiveness or its practicability, but is its boldness and audaciousness. He has even assumed that the Department had practicable plans by which such a policy could be writ into action, although, as will be shown, there is no basis in fact for his assumption, and the Department itself admitted, after they had given sufficient study to these very bold and audacious

plans, in the early months of 1917, that they were impracticable and impossible of execution.

"5th. The Secretary of the Navy has seen fit in his statement to make reflections and direct charges against my personal character, against my professional services, against my ability as an officer and against my loyalty to my country. These have no bearing whatsoever upon the facts, except in so far as they may serve, by discrediting the source of criticism in the uninformed public mind, to result in discrediting also my statements, even though they have been established by official documents and confirmed by the testimony of the Department's own witnesses.

"6th. In defending the Navy, the Secretary has also seen fit to introduce matters reflecting upon the war services of the Navy of a friendly nation with whom we were associated in the war. He has charged that this navy was ineffective, that it had no plans, and he has quoted the President's assertion to the effect that in the crisis it was helpless to the point of panic. He has further charged that I was so hypnotized by this service that I genuflected continuously to its policies and leaders; that my dearest hopes were bound up with such trivialities as decorations, that I consistently depreciated the efforts of my own service, ignored my own Department, attempted to deceive the head of my own nation, and endeavoured to use the forces under my command in the interests of Great Britain, and contrary to the interests of the United States. These charges were, of course, so baseless, so thoroughly in contradiction to the established facts, that it seems hard to understand how they could be seriously made."

V

Mr. Daniels' testimony is characterized by the inclusion of large numbers of documents, reports and statements which have no conceivable relation to the specific criticisms of Admiral Sims and other witnesses. These documents were avowedly introduced to show "what the Navy had done in the war." We already knew that. Admiral Sims had told the story clearly and eloquently in his "Victory at Sea." The object of the investigation was to discover what had *not*

been done by Mr. Daniels and his naval advisers in the Department, to prepare for war before April, 1917, and to enter the war effectively in the first year of our intervention. These reports, however interesting, bore not in the least upon these questions.

A simple list of the documents of this character introduced in evidence by Mr. Daniels will show to what extent he used these smoke-screen tactics of diversion and evasion. In this list will be found the title or subject of the documents and the number of printed pages of the testimony devoted to each.

Title or Subject	Page Nos.	Total Pages
Allied praise of the U. S. Navy	2008–2018	10
General Summary of War Activities: Bureau of Ordnance	2047–2080	33
Magnitude of the Navy's Task	2099–2106	7
Report of First Troop Convoy	2125–2135	10
Troop Transportation 1917–1918	2142–2156	15
The Naval Overseas Transportation Service	2168–2173	5
Battle of Jutland	2200–2203	4
Attacks by U. S. vessels on submarines	2206–2227	21
Naval Consulting Board	2228–2233	5
Report of House Naval Committee, 1918	2234–2247	14
Naval Appropriation and Construction 1903–1918.	2253–2278	25
Letter from Daniels to President Garfield of Williams College, 26 April, 1915	2320–2325	5
Speech of Admiral Benson, Naval Academy, 1915	2326–2330	5
1916 Building Program	2331–2346	15
Report of War Activities, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts (Including 50 pages of statistical tables of all articles bought during the war.)	2346–2448	103
The Abolition of Wine Messes in the Navy	2449–2458	10
Engagements of Armed guards with submarines	2459–2466	6
Report of War Work — Bureau of Construction and Repair	2473–2553	80
Work of the Bureau of Steam Engineering	2556–2580	25
Report of Naval Communication Service	2580–2593	14
Report of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery	2593–2604	11
Summary activities of Judge Advocate General	2604–2614	10
The Marine Corps in the World War	2616–2644	28
Daniels' speech in London May 1, 1919	2649–2652	4

Report of the War Operations of the Bureau of Yards and Docks	2652–2675	23
Record of Development of Aviation in the United States Navy	2677–2710	33
Work of the Office of Naval Intelligence	2710–2716	7
Personnel of the Navy — Report of Bureau of Navigation	2719–2779	60
Quotations from previous witnesses with regard to efficiency of Atlantic Fleet and of naval operations in the war	2781–2813	32
		620

Secretary Daniels' direct statement occupies pages 1981–2827 of the printed record and amounts therefore to a total of 836 pages. Of this no less than 620 pages, or approximately three-fourths, is devoted to the documents, reports and statements listed above.

Many of these will doubtless be of great interest to the historian who writes the full story of our naval activities and operations in the war. None of them relate specifically to the issues raised by Admiral Sims' letter. Three-fourths of Mr. Daniels' testimony, in other words, was pure camouflage.

VI

The Secretary seemed to think that a recital of what the Navy did in the war, and the mere fact of the allied victory invalidated any criticism that might be made of his own policies and methods. He asserted that Admiral Sims' criticisms of our unpreparedness in 1917 and of mistakes made by the Department, were reflections on the Navy itself. Repeatedly, throughout his testimony, he used expressions like the following:

"In the face of a great job greatly done, it is a matter of national regret that any naval officer should for any reason or any

motive seek either to minimize it or to cast aspersions upon the *splendid work by brother officers in or out of the Department.*"

. . . . . .

. . " *The Navy and its service in the World War* stand without a trace of the mud with which a few have sought to bespatter it."

. . . . . .

" The only man injured in public esteem by his charges, *reflecting upon his brother officers,* and his attempt to hold their self-sacrificing and successful service up to condemnation is Admiral Sims himself."

" You have heard many great admirals of the American Navy testify that Admiral Sims' attacks upon the *work of the American Navy during the war* are either wholly unwarranted or grossly exaggerated."

. . . . . .

" The results — the success of the naval ships in every character of service, in fighting submarines, in transporting troops, in convoys, in minelaying, in patrol and all other activities — attest the efficiency of operations and the department. Against that record, applauded at home and abroad, the discharge of poison gas by men with or without a grievance cannot prevail with any just men in the country against the patriotic men in and out of the Department, who served with such fidelity and efficiency."

These are only a few of scores of such statements to be found in Mr. Daniels' testimony. Yet he knew full well that Admiral Sims had never attacked the Navy, or made charges against it, or reflected on its war service. The criticisms were directed only against the heads of the Department. It was no fault of the Navy's that Mr. Daniels had prevented it from being adequately prepared for war in 1917; that he had kept it from having an organization fit to prepare plans and conduct operations; that he had refused to request an increase of personnel to man the ships; and that the departmental policies and methods had kept it from getting actively into the war for many months, and handicapped

its operations by military blunders. The criticisms of Admiral Sims and other officers were directed solely against the unpreparedness, the delays, the military errors, which so sorely handicapped the Navy in the war. The revelation of these handicaps, far from belittling the war service of the Navy, makes it stand out with increased glory. It was indeed wonderful that under such conditions the Navy was able to operate at all.

VII

Another method used by Mr. Daniels to divert attention from himself was that of counterattack. He made many baseless assertions and insinuations concerning the officers who had volunteered testimony critical of his administration. Most of these were directed against Admiral Sims. The other witnesses who gave testimony unfavourable to him he dismissed contemptuously as minor persons, or officers with a grievance. A few typical instances are quoted below:

"The officers who, upon minor details, made criticisms *either were not in the war at all or held positions not comparable in responsibility* to those intrusted to the twelve (admirals), some holding positions so unimportant or subordinate as not to give them opportunity to know the great policies and activities of the Navy in the World War. You have heard their testimony and you know that, beside the great record made by the Navy, the charges brought forward touch matters which had only the smallest bearing on the Navy's great service. . . . The war was won, and that the Navy did its full share toward that great result has been thoroughly established."

. . . . . .

"On the part of certain critics, self-appointed, to ferret out the molehills of mistakes which they exaggerate into mountains, you have been wearied and the public nauseated with the abortive attempt to make a perspective in which a noble and notable accomplishment appears as the dim and fading background of comparatively unimportant errors of judgment."

. . . . . .

"You, gentlemen, have heard certain witnesses who have to some extent supported Admiral Sims, but who mainly devoted their energies to rehashing ancient animosities, being largely people with a grievance . . . and no personal knowledge of the principal matters dealt with by Admiral Sims himself."

The Secretary was unsparing in his attacks upon Admiral Sims. In the very beginning of his statement he said:

. . . . . .

"In the fact of a great job greatly done, it is a matter of national regret that any naval officer should, for any reason or any motive, seek either to minimize it or to cast aspersions upon the splendid work by brother officers, in or out of the Department. I confess to surprise and regret when Admiral Sims made public the letter which was the occasion of your hearings. During the conduct of war, in several important particulars, I felt he did not wholly measure up to expectations in certain particular ways, of which six may be mentioned:

"1. He lacked the vision to see that a great and new project to bar the submarines from their hunting grounds should be promptly adopted and carried out, no matter what the cost or how radical the departure from what ultra prudent men regarded as impracticable.

"2. He seemed to accept the views of the British Admiralty as superior to anything, that could come from America, and urged those views even when the Navy Department proposed plans that proved more effective.

"3. In public speeches and other ways he gave a maximum of credit to British efforts and minimized what his country was doing.

"4. He coveted British decorations and seemed to place a higher value on honours given abroad than on honours that could be conferred by the American government.

"5. He aspired to become a member of the British Admiralty and wrote complainingly when the American Government declined to permit him to accept such tender by the King of England.

"6. He placed protection of merchant shipping, with concentration of destroyers at Queenstown, as the main operation of our

forces abroad, failing to appreciate that the protection of transports carrying troops to France was the paramount — and I wish to emphasize that was the paramount — naval duty until I felt impelled to cable him peremptorily that such was our main mission."

VIII

The most superficial review of Mr. Daniels' testimony suffices to show that he was not really trying to disprove the incontrovertible facts which had been sworn to by a long list of naval witnesses, including even those officers he had summoned to defend him. He was trying to win his case before the public by sensational headline appeals. He was obviously appealing throughout to prejudice and to ignorance.

On no other ground can one explain his statements quoted above, with regard to the credibility of witnesses who gave testimony damaging to him. Admirals Benson, Mayo, McKean, Grant, Plunkett, Palmer and Captain Pratt were assuredly not men with a grievance. The witnesses whose testimony proved Mr. Daniels' unfitness and the betrayal of a public trust had, without exception, occupied during the war positions of great importance, as has been pointed out in previous chapters.

In his attack upon Admiral Sims, Daniels overshot his mark in the use of headline tactics. In addition to the six specific charges against the Admiral, noted above, Daniels' testimony was replete with nasty flings and insinuations, unworthy of a Cabinet officer.

Mr. Daniels spared no words in his effort to make it appear that Sims had been treasonously disloyal to American interests. Characteristic passages are quoted below:

"There is a peculiar malady which affects a certain type of Americans who go abroad and become in many respects un-American. That malady causes them to regard others who do not lose their thorough-going Americanism and undivided allegiance, as

having 'idiosyncrasies.' Sims genuflected so before the British Admiralty ideas and accepted British views so fully and coveted British honours so earnestly that he came to regard as anti-British such a rugged American as Admiral Benson." (Benson on March 28, 1917, be it remembered, was as ready "to fight the British as the Germans.")

. . . . . .

"Is it proper for a naval officer to send a cablegram for the purpose of deception? . . . Until recently no naval officer has acted as if he thought it proper or excusable to say anything officially to mislead the people of his own country. . . . It is generally recognized that in war it is not only justifiable but laudable to deceive the enemy. Admiral Sims now propounds a new doctrine that he considered it justifiable and proper to deceive his superior officers."

. . . . . .

"Admiral Sims was so hypnotized by British influences that he was willing to try to lure the President of the United States into the feeling that 'regardless of any future developments, we can always count upon the support of the British Navy.' . . . It is to be hoped that if Admiral Sims has such assurances he will send a copy . . . to be filed in the archives of 'Sops for the Simple.'"

. . . . . .

"It is one thing to co-operate heartily on equal terms with the navy of another country. It is quite another thing to be absorbed in a belief in the infallibility of another country, and to have an obsession of its supposed superiority. That was the attitude of Admiral Sims, as evidenced by his own statements and action."

. . . . . .

"This article (referring to Sims' long fight for gunnery improvements in the Navy against the opposition of older and reactionary officers) shows a spirit of pride in continued insubordination to authority . . . little of which I was familiar with when Admiral Sims was entrusted with the confidential mission to London. If I had fully understood and properly assessed his

past attitude and conduct with respect to the highest spirit of loyalty he would not have been sent."

The Secretary quoted from a *personal* letter Admiral Sims had written to Admiral Bayly of the British Navy in which Sims had said:

"There is no doubt at all that the principal dignitaries at home are very nervous lest some of our troop transports be torpedoed. Of course you will understand that this nervousness is largely of a political kind."

The Secretary then said:

"An attack upon the American Government in a letter to a British admiral, that because we wanted to protect the lives of our 2,000,000 soldiers, it was political. If I had seen that letter, gentlemen, I should have ordered him home and put him under court-martial."

In referring to Admiral Sims' estimate of the probable results of our naval unpreparedness and our delay in getting into the war effectively, Mr. Daniels said:

"Admiral Sims' statement is preposterous, absurd and without foundation, an outrage upon the American people and upon the American Navy . . . a preposterous and outrageous slander upon an honoured service."

Mr. Daniels quoted a passage of Admiral Sims' letter of July 16, 1917, discussing our general naval policy in the war, in which Sims has pointed out the advantage of unity of command. Then the Secretary made a characteristic statement:

"He (Sims) did not tell you voluntarily, though it was brought out in cross-examination, that he recommended that the British Admiralty (for that was what he meant, though he camouflaged it by naming Italy and France first) direct all operations. . . . I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that we viewed with hesitation and caution the proposition of turning over the control

of the American Navy to any other navy in the world; and we never thought of doing it; and we would have been unworthy as Americans, if we had followed the advice given by Admiral Sims."

Mr. Daniels also charged that our officers and men had not received rewards for their attacks upon submarines because of "Sims' neglect"; that Sims was a disciple of "Von Tirpitz" and that his motive in commenting on the naval lessons of the war was a desire to "Prussianize the Navy."

In another place Daniels sought to convey the impression that Sims had been inspired by Senator Penrose to present his criticisms and condemned his action as a purely political move; because of the fact that Senator Penrose, member of the Naval Affairs Committee, had called attention on the floor of the Senate in August, 1918, to the perfectly well known facts about the unpreparedness of the Navy in 1917, and the long delay in getting into the war, and had made an estimate of the cost to the country of the Secretary's "procrastination," which was very similar to that made, altogether independently, by Admiral Sims in 1920.

IX

Every single statement quoted above, reflecting upon Admiral Sims, was proven untrue by the sworn testimony of many other witnesses and by the official records of the Navy Department. They were obviously made by the Secretary for the purpose of discrediting one of the most distinguished, honourable and patriotic officers who has ever worn the uniform of the United States Navy.

The enormity of his action can be the better appreciated by contrasting these statements, made in 1920, with the tribute he paid to Admiral Sims on July 22, 1919. Eight months had then passed since the armistice. Mr. Daniels had not only had a full opportunity to review our naval

part in the war, but had made a trip abroad, had conferred with the heads of the allied navies and had seen for himself the character and results of the work done by Admiral Sims, while in command of our naval forces in the war zone. As a result of his careful survey, Mr. Daniels on July 22, 1919, recommended to Congress that Sims be given the rank of admiral for life. In his letter he described Sims' services in the following terms:

"In the anxious days before duty led the United States to enter the World War, when it was decided to arm merchant ships, the President determined to send to Great Britain a naval officer of high rank and of proved ability, to represent our country. He was selected for what was then a delicate mission, as it was during all the succeeding months, an assignment that called for a man of quickness of grasp, mastery of his profession, and ability to sit as the equal in any conference of the naval leaders of free nations. The country approved the selection of Rear Admiral William Sowden Sims. He had already shown the qualities which made his mission not only of the greatest service to his own country, but which brought the Allied navies into warm fellowship as well as in close co-operation. He was at once welcomed into the conference of naval leaders and during the whole war was recognized among our Allies, as well as by his own countrymen, as one of the ablest and most brilliant naval officers in the cause that demanded initiative, understanding and a comprehension, which included among other things the hard duty to safeguard the carrying of millions of fighting men across the seas and to defeat the submarine menace. It is a matter of national gratification that in Rear Admiral Sims. America sent, as commander of the naval forces operating in European waters, an officer who served the world with such conspicuous ability as to win the confidence, the approval and also the sincere admiration of the entire world."

On February 7, 1920, Secretary Daniels, in testifying with regard to the medal awards, said "every word I could say then (July 22, 1919) or now, of Admiral Sims as a naval

officer of ability and, in certain lines, of brilliance . . . is true."

Is one to believe the Daniels of 1919, smugly and happily appropriating the splendid war record of the Navy as a chariot to bear him in triumph to the White House? Or the Daniels of 1920, cowering before the judgment seat, seeking by evasive methods to keep the public from realizing his neglect of his primary duty, and his degradation of the naval service?

X

The quotations from Mr. Daniels' testimony thus far given are in no sense unrepresentative. They indicate correctly his whole attitude of mind, and the spirit in which he gave his testimony. Beneath his suave geniality there lurks an unscrupulous vindictiveness which the officers of the Navy have long since come to know.

As one reads his testimony and remembers that he was a Cabinet officer testifying under oath, on questions of the gravest import, affecting vitally the future of our first line of national defence, the tone of his statement, his lack of dignity, his shifty evasions present a spectacle almost unprecedented in our history.

Admiral Sims, in language the more forceful, by contrast, in its dignity and restraint drew up a formidable indictment of the Secretary in beginning his final testimony.

"You have listened," said Admiral Sims, "to a long statement from the responsible head of the Navy Department, remarkable alike for its mistakes and misinterpretations, and for its unrestrained assault upon my services during the war, upon my motives, and upon my ability and credibility as an officer.

"But before proceeding any further, I wish to state very clearly, and once for all, that in all of the comments that I shall have occasion to make upon the mistakes and misinterpretations

in question, I do not desire in the slightest degree to imply that they were intentional, or that the Secretary was not sincerely convinced of the fairness and correctness of his conclusions.

" I have no desire to enter upon any personalities, and I have no intention of doing so; nor will I attempt any answer to the personal reflections and aspersions contained in the testimony of the Secretary.

" He has dealt at length with many technical questions, and in doing so has almost invariably drawn conclusions therefrom reflecting upon my conduct and upon my motives, not only during the war, but during a large part of my naval career.

" However interesting may be the subject of my personal opinions, and private character, it seems to me to have no connection however remote with the question as to whether or not the Navy Department committed serious errors in the conduct of the war. I am not appearing before you to defend myself. My sole purpose from the beginning has been, and still is, to do what I can to prevent a repetition of the military mistakes to which I have invited attention.

" It was to be expected that some errors should appear in such a discussion of technical military matters. No civilian without previous military training could hope to deal at such length with so many questions of naval policy, strategy and tactics, without some misunderstanding, misinterpretations and mistakes.

" It was hardly to be expected, however, that the responsible head of the Navy should make, under oath, before this committee, a statement in which every essential conclusion was based on errors of facts or misinterpretations of naval matters.

" The fact remains, however, that he has done so. In pointing these out, I will confine myself to the testimony presented not by myself, or by the witnesses called at my request, but solely by the Department's own witnesses."

CHAPTER XIX

MR. DANIELS' MISREPRESENTATIONS

I

IN his first day's testimony the Secretary clearly explained the methods by which he hoped to discredit the criticisms of his administration. After admitting that Admiral Sims' letter "might have resulted in good," if it had been considered by "professional experts," the Secretary said:

"Wide publicity has been given to a number of charges by Admiral Sims reflecting *upon the conduct and results achieved by the U S. Navy in the World War.*"

Mr. Daniels must have known that Admiral Sims has never made any charges against the Navy. His criticisms of departmental mal-administration were not reflections on the Navy itself.

The next sentence of the Secretary's statement, however, is more significant.

"We know that hindsight is better than foresight, and after any great undertaking, however successful, it is easy to point out things done that ought not to have been done, and things left undone that ought to have been done. The most serious charges made by Admiral Sims are without foundation and others are not justified. . . . You have heard a number of the most competent officers of the Navy, with first hand knowledge of what happened during the war . . . whose testimony I think would have been accepted by any open minded man as absolute refutation of practically all of Admiral Sims' charges.

"I can add but little to what has been told you already without covering again the ground which has been covered by the

most capable officers of the Navy. I feel, however, that the charges against the Navy are so scandalously unwarranted by the actual facts and conditions that it is my duty to give you gentlemen the benefit [?] *of the fullest possible statement, covering of course only those activities which constitute the outstanding achievements of the American Navy,* which from top to bottom, did its full duty during the war and measured up to the highest standards that can be conceived."

Stripped of its excess words this statement means:

1. Some of Admiral Sims' charges are admitted to be true.

2. A general denial is made of other unspecified charges, based upon a simple assertion of Mr. Daniels and upon his incorrect assumption that other witnesses had already disproved them.

3. An intention on the part of the Secretary to devote his own testimony to matters never in question and hence irrelevant to the investigation, i.e., " *only those activities which constitute the outstanding achievements of the American Navy.*"

Mr. Daniels also attempted to divert the attack from himself. He did not feel it necessary to say a word in defence of his own acts during the war, he said, as the criticisms " have been directed solely against the military activities of the Department." . . . These, he declared he had entrusted entirely to his naval advisers. This statement is but another illustration of his effort to convert the investigation into an internal service feud by setting one group of officers against another in the hope of thus evading his own responsibility.

II

A typical case of misrepresentation of the testimony of the naval witnesses occurred in the Secretary's endeavour to show that the Navy was fully prepared for war in 1917. He quoted from many witnesses testimony relating to the efficiency, in 1917, of Admiral Mayo's fleet of battleships

and destroyers; this he represented as proof that the whole Navy was equally efficient.

No one had denied the gunnery efficiency of the modern battleships in 1917. The Fleet comprised, however, only a dozen battleships and some twenty destroyers, out of the 300 fighting vessels then on the navy list. None of the other ships were even half prepared. Many of them had no crews. The only vessels of the Navy, in fact, that were even relatively ready for war were those which could not be used against submarines, i. e., the battleships. Yet, since 1916, it had been apparent that if we entered the war the vessels needed would be, not the battleships, but the light craft. Of these only a score of destroyers were adequately prepared for war in 1917. All the naval witnesses admitted this. Mr. Daniels, ignoring their omissions, endeavoured to make it appear that their statements with regard to the dreadnaughts applied to the whole Navy.

III

Similarly, the Secretary said:

"Perfectly uninformed and wanton statements have been made that the Navy Department lacked war plans and preparations. . . . The truth is that from its creation the General Board has been employed with a study of naval warfare and preparing for any conditions of war that might arise."

The question, however, was not whether the General Board had some war plans locked up in a safe somewhere. It has been proven that the Navy Department had no plans that were adequate to the situation in 1917, or that were actually used during the war. This Mr. Daniels could deny as flatly as he pleased. There was indeed no power to prevent him perjuring himself if he chose so to do. His attempt to present as the departmental war plans the unapproved memoranda of the General Board, most of which had never

been acted on at all, or the personal notes of Captain Pratt, was an absurd evasion of the issue, as the testimony proves.

IV

The attempt of the Secretary to show that any real preparations had been made for the war, previous to 1917, was equally futile. He presented the administrative plan, originally prepared by Admiral Fiske, that he had approved on May 28, 1915, after refusing for two years to sign it. This only outlined in the most general way the probable activities of the various branches of the Department in the event of war and required quarterly reports from them as to progress made in preparations. As this was done, said the Secretary, "the Navy, therefore, *exercised all the foresight and preparedness that was possible before we entered the war!*" No more complete admission than this could be asked, of the whole case against Mr. Daniels. The making of a simple administrative plan, he regarded as the sole step toward preparedness we could take before actually entering the war!

As a matter of fact, the approval of this administrative plan, the organization of the Naval Consulting Board and the creation of the Office of Naval Operation, all in the year 1915, were the only definite steps toward preparedness before 1917 that Mr. Daniels was able to cite.

These three measures had been advocated unsuccessfully by Admiral Fiske for the two previous years, and it was with great reluctance that in 1915 Mr. Daniels accepted them. The Office of Naval Operations, in fact, had to be created by Congress against Daniels' opposition. Truly, Admiral Fiske saved Daniels from utter ruin. Without these measures our Navy would have been in chaos at the outbreak of war. Daniels calmly presented them to the committee as evidences of his own foresight!

As further evidences of the preparedness of the Navy between 1914 and 1917, the Secretary quoted passages from his own annual reports. These were on a par with his declaration in his annual report of 1918, that on April 6, 1917, "the Navy had been made ready from stem to stern to the fullest possible extent for any eventuality."

Mr. Daniels' attempt to prove that the Department had done everything possible to get the Navy ready for war before 1917; that it had perfected its organization, that it had officially approved war plans, that its personnel was adequate, that its ships were ready to fight, was based altogether, either on his own unsupported assertions, or upon misrepresentations of fact and of the testimony of the previous witnesses, perhaps not intentional but inspired by that utter failure to understand naval problems that has always characterized his actions.

V

The testimony of Secretary Daniels is chiefly notable for its avoidance of the specific criticisms that had been directed against his administration.

When one eliminates the six hundred and twenty pages of his testimony, devoted to reports of the activities of various sections of the Navy Department before and during the war, and to other documents equally irrelevant to the specific questions under investigation, the remainder of his testimony can be said to be devoted almost exclusively to an attempt to establish three main points; each of these involved attacks or reflections not only upon Admiral Sims, but upon the Allies as well.

These three main points were:

First: Admiral Sims and the Allies opposed the "new, bold and audacious policies," which characterized from the first the effort of the Navy Department.

Second: Sims not only "genuflected" to British views but was almost treasonably pro-British, in that he placed British interests above those of his own country. Sims and the Allies had proposed no effective plans. Everything that had been done during the war was "suggested" by President Wilson, or the General Board, or Mr. Edison, or Henry Ford, or Mr. Daniels himself, before it was finally put into operation by the Allies. Sims accepted all the British ideas and wanted to turn our Navy over to the British, because of his "love of the glitter of foreign decorations and his desire for British honours."

Third: Admiral Sims was influenced in his actions and in his disposition of forces in Europe almost solely by a desire to save British shipping. In doing this he neglected the duty of protecting American troops.

VI

Nothing was more characteristic of Mr. Daniels' methods than his assertion that the Navy Department in 1917 had advocated "new, bold and audacious policies."

The motive for presenting such a contention seems clear. The American people like to believe in the inventiveness, courage and intrepidity of their race. They know too little of military subjects to be able readily to discriminate between fact and fancy. The Northern Mine Barrage had been made possible by American inventiveness; it had been laid chiefly by the American Navy; it was a gigantic and very successful feat of those colossal proportions which we like to consider American in their conception and execution; it was the chief war project initiated and carried out chiefly by Americans.

The Secretary, as point one in his attack on Sims, said that the Admiral

"lacked the vision to see that a great and new project to bar the submarines from their hunting grounds should be promptly adopted and carried out, no matter what the cost, or how radical the departure from what ultra-prudent men regarded as impracticable."

. . . . . .

"As to the North Sea Barrage the Department felt it necessary,— so much importance did it attach to the enterprise,— to send Admiral Mayo over to convince our British naval associates of its feasibility after Admiral Sims had accepted the view of the British Admiralty that it was impracticable, and had tried to induce the Bureau of Ordnance and the Department not to press it."

. . . . . .

"It will be necessary, as a matter of justice to the United States Navy, which has been charged with failure to act with more expedition in the first few months of the war, to contrast *the bold and audacious policies we presented and urged,* with the delay in some of those great projects caused by Admiral Sims' opposition and the lack of faith in the practicability of some of them by the British Admiralty."

. . . . . .

"When war was declared the President sensed better than any naval expert across the seas the necessity for *a bold and audacious plan of naval warfare* . . . long before any naval authority abroad had approved the idea of the barrage, which was placed across the North Sea. the President had sensed the futility — the utter futility — of depending solely upon pursuing submarines all over the ocean and declared the logical idea was to shut them up in their nests."

VII

Mr. Daniels quoted from President Wilson's speech to the officers of the fleet on the *U.S.S. Pennsylvania* on August 11, 1917. The President had said at that time:

"This is an unprecedented war and, therefore, it is a war in one sense for amateurs. Nobody ever before conducted a war like this and therefore nobody can pretend to be a professional in a war like this. . . .

"We are hunting hornets all over the farm and letting the nest alone. *None of us knows how to go to the nest and crush it,* and yet I despair of hunting for hornets all over the sea when I know where the nest is, and I know that the nest is breeding hornets as fast as I can find them. I am willing for my part, and I know you are willing, for I know the stuff you are made of — I am willing to sacrifice half the Navy Great Britain and we together have to crush that nest, because if we crush it, the war is won.

"We have got to throw tradition to the winds."

. . . . . .

"Every time we have suggested anything to the British Admiralty, the reply has come back that virtually amounted to this, that it had never been done that way, and I felt like saying, 'Well, nothing was ever done so systematically as nothing is being done now.'"

One or two points in the President's address should be particularly noted. His general criticism of the lack of effectiveness of the British Navy can be explained by the assumption that he was receiving his information about naval matters chiefly from his Secretary of the Navy and from the Chief of Naval Operations. His statement, that "none of us knows how to go to the nest and crush it," is in itself a sufficient contradiction of the fairy tales Mr. Daniels told the Senate Committee in 1920. On August 11, 1917, no practicable "bold and audacious" plan had yet been approved by the Navy Department.

VIII

Mr. Daniels' repetition of the phrase "new, bold and audacious policies," grew decidedly monotonous. The Committee had heard Admiral Benson, only a few days be-

fore, relate the full details of the policies of timid prudence and of " safety first " for merely American interests, in utter disregard of what might happen to the allied cause, that had in reality inspired the Navy Department in the first months of the war.

When Mr. Daniels attempted to get down to facts and state what he really meant by his " new, bold and audacious policies," he was able to cite only one example, the Northern Mine Barrage. Yet this in its very nature was the very opposite of a bold, aggressive policy. No weapon is more passive, more defensive in its character than a mine. The building of a fence of mines across the North Sea, far remote from the German bases, was indeed an enormous undertaking, so far as the amount of material required and the difficulties involved, were concerned. But no one who knows anything of warfare would ever call the laying of a barrier of mines several hundred miles from the enemy as a particularly bold and audacious or aggressive project.

The attack on Zeebrugge was indeed a " bold and audacious " undertaking. This, though a minor operation, had required over six months' preparation. Any similar scheme, such as was suggested by President Wilson, and as had been fully studied by the Allies two years previously, would have required a prohibitive amount of material and a great sacrifice of men and ships, with no assurance of complete success. Even the attack on Zeebrugge and Ostend did not succeed in closing those ports to submarines.

The Northern Mine Barrage was an undertaking of a distinctly different character — an essentially passive and defensive plan.

The Secretary, unable to discover for his testimony any really practicable aggressive plans, such as President Wilson hoped for, therefore seized upon the Northern Mine Barrage as his stalking horse. The general public would not realize the difference between offensive and defensive

measures. He would therefore condemn the British for their failure to act aggressively against submarines and would assert that the essentially defensive mine barrage was one of those " new, bold and audacious " projects which Admiral Sims had opposed and the British resisted for months while the Navy Department was thirsting for blood, and concentrating its war efforts on the maintenance of a patrol off the Atlantic coast three thousand miles from the war zone to such an extent that even the inshore waters of the North Carolina Sound were patrolled!

IX

This criticism of the allied war policy and of Admiral Sims' activities was completely demolished by the exceedingly able review which Admiral Sims made in his rebuttal statement:

". . . Let me review briefly the facts concerning the mine barrage. Secretary Daniels has told you that this plan was first proposed to the Department in a memorandum of the 15th of April, 1917, submitted by Commander Fullinwider of the Bureau of Ordnance. He also stated that on receiving this memorandum, the Department immediately cabled me asking me to take up the Northern Mine Barrage proposal with the British. This is a completely inaccurate statement of what happened. On the 15th of April, Commander Fullinwider submitted a memorandum to the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance on the subject " Anti-submarine Warfare." This was not a plan for a Northern Mine Barrage, but was a general review of the whole military situation at that time, containing the personal ideas and recommendations of Commander Fullinwider as to a great variety of different things that he believed should have been done. About half the memorandum was a discussion of various methods of protecting merchant shipping; the other half was devoted to a discussion of various anti-submarine methods. He suggested that there were three general lines of attack on submarines, that is,

"'(a) Destroy them at their home base.

"'(b) Prevent their egress from or ingress to their home port.

"'(c) Hunt them down and destroy them at sea.'

"Commander Fullinwider proposed, among other things, that the offensive efforts against submarines should take the form, either of closing the German ports or channels, or of establishing mine barriers to seal up the North Sea. He said:

"'All measures for sealing ports or channels present the difficulty that the Germans have so extensively mined their waters and have such supervision and control thereof as to render such measures almost, if not entirely, impracticable. It is possible, however, to establish mine barriers in zones at a distance from the German coast, practically sealing up the North Sea. This will require between 500,000 and 1,000,000 mines.'

"After a further discussion of the question of barrages in the North Sea, Commander Fullinwider estimated that 774,000 mines would be required.

"The message which the Secretary of the Navy sent to me on the 16th of April, 1917, has already been quoted numerous times during these hearings. It made not the slightest reference to any proposal of a barrage in the North Sea. It merely desired to know whether any plans had been made to seal up the German bases and ports, and whether such a plan would be feasible. I replied to this, at length, by cable and by letter, pointing out the fact that such proposals had been made since the beginning of the war, had been carefully studied and were considered impracticable. I have already read you in this statement Admiral Mayo's comment on one proposal to accomplish this, which was discussed at the naval conference in London. Admiral Mayo believed the scheme quite impracticable. The Navy Department, in their cable to me, of October 21, 1917, similarly stated that, in the opinion of the Department, this scheme was impracticable. . . .

"In the Bureau of Ordnance's official history of the Mine Barrage, we find the following statement:

"'On April 16, 1917, the Department cabled Admiral W. S. Sims, in command of the U. S. Naval Forces in European waters,

directing him to report on the practicability of blocking the German coast efficiently in order to make the ingress and egress of submarines practically impossible. He, in answer, stated that this, of course, had been the object of repeated attempts by the British Navy with all possible means, and had been found unfeasible. Failure to shut in the submarines by a coast blockade using mines, nets and patrols in the Bight and along the Flanders coast focused the attention of the Department upon plans for the alternative of restricting the enemy to the North Sea, by closing to him the exits through the Channel and the northern end between Scotland and Norway. . . . These are outlined in a memorandum of the Office of Operations dated May 9, 1917. . . . This was proposed to be done by establishing a barrage of nets, anchored mines and floating mines.'

". . . The Department itself suggested no barrage until the cable which I received on May 11th, and the kind of a barrage which they proposed at that time was clearly impracticable in view of the amount of material that would have been required and the length of time necessary to have made it effective. The British had long before carefully considered similar plans, but had recognized that the quantities of material required, and the length of time and the number of vessels necessary, made the scheme entirely impracticable. As has been pointed out to you, the whole basis of the Northern Barrage, the one thing which made it possible was the invention of a new type of mine which enormously reduced the amount of material required and the length of time necessary. The Department themselves have at all times fully recognized this, until the Secretary made his astonishing statement before you that the mine barrage could have been laid in 1917 and that I was myself personally responsible for the delay.

" In 1918, the Secretary of the Navy evidently had a very different opinion, for we find, in his Annual Report submitted to the President, in December of that year, the following statement, page 48:

" ' The plan to close the North Sea and thereby deny enemy submarines free access to the Atlantic from German bases, had its inception in the Bureau of Ordnance in April, 1917, immedi-

ately following the entrance of the United States into the war. *At this time there had not been developed anywhere a type of mine suitable for the Scotland-Norway line, whereon the depths of water were as great as 900 feet and where a prohibitive number of mines of the then existing type would have been required to mine this line from the surface to a depth of 250 to 300 feet.'*

. . . . . .

"As a matter of fact, the first test of the new firing device which was to form the basis of the new mine, did not occur until the 18th of June, 1917, at New London. Those tests were not altogether satisfactory, and no action was taken by the Bureau of Ordnance to submit plans for a barrage based on the use of this mine until after further tests had been made on the 10th of July, 1917. At this time 'although the design of the complete mine had not yet been decided upon and could not be completed for several months, the mine section of the Bureau of Ordnance was sufficiently assured of the successful development of the mine to submit tentative plans to the Chief of Bureau.' (This quotation is from the Bureau of Ordnance's official history of the mine barrage.) It was not until July 30, 1917, that the Bureau of Ordnance addressed a communication to the Chief of Naval Operations, submitting complete information regarding the new firing device, and 'proposing an American-British joint offensive operation in the form of a Northern Barrage.'

"The question of the possibility of a Northern Barrage is clearly and accurately discussed in the official history of the mine barrage, issued by the Bureau of Ordnance; for example,

"'The possibility of a Northern Barrage depended upon the successful design of a mine to a far greater extent than is usual in such matters. Had nothing better than the ordinary type of mine such as that used by the British (and also by the United States at that time) been available, the Northern Barrage project *would have been utterly impossible of execution within the time allowed by reason of the enormous number of mines required for a barrage 280 miles long. The combined resources of the Allies, especially in the matter of high explosives, could not have produced the required number of mines, nor could the combined mining forces have planted them in a single year.* . . . On November

1, 1917, after the barrage project had been finally and definitely adopted, the only parts . . . of the mine that had been completely designed were the firing mechanism and the mine case. However the Mine Section of the Bureau of Ordnance, under the immediate direction of Commander Fullinwider, felt no doubt of its ability to complete a satisfactory development of the new mine, and to get it into production in due time.'

" In another place we find the statement:

" ' The tentative design of the mine had to be modified as a result of experiments and more mature study of the subject. . . . It was found, too, that the Bureau had been too optimistic in its forecast relative to the early completion of the design and its early production.'

" In view of this official Departmental statement of the real facts in the case, the Secretary's contention that I had anything to do with delaying the barrage needs no further comment. . . .

. . . . . .

". . . The laying of the barrage was not in any case the single bold stroke that ended submarine warfare. The submarine had already been defeated in its mission of forcing the Allies to peace long before the barrage was laid. or even before it had been begun. The very possibility of laying the barrage depended indeed upon first mastering to a great extent the submarine. Only thus was it possible to transport the material needed overseas.

. . . . . .

" Thus the whole of the Secretary's contentions concerning the bold and audacious policy which he favoured reduces itself to this: That the Department, in the early months of the war, knowing little or nothing of the war experience of the Allies, were obsessed by a desire to astonish the world by doing some new and unheard of thing, by discovering the ' royal road to victory '; in the desire to do this, they proposed two plans in April and May, 1917, both of which were impracticable and both of which the Department itself later admitted to be impracticable; and in thus concentrating upon an endeavour to find the end of the rainbow, they postponed the effective intervention of our Navy in the war for a number of months, and thus contributed to the postponement of the ultimate victory.

"It therefore seems clear that this is one of those cases of misrepresentations of fact into which the Secretary, as a civilian, has fallen, because of his failure to understand certain very simple technical considerations. It is hardly a defence of the Department's delays in 1917 to say that they did not do what they could have done because they hoped that they might ultimately be able to do very much better. It is not enough to declare one's allegiance to a bold and audacious policy. It is necessary also to meet the crisis of a war in such a way as to make possible victory. No war policy is of any value unless means are available for carrying it out immediately and effectively."

X

Secretary Daniels' contention that Sims had "genuflected" to British views, had looked to the British for all his ideas, and had been actuated chiefly by a "love of glitter and foreign recognition and honour" was based on equally flimsy grounds.

The Admiral had lived in London; he had been respected and admired by the British service; he had established closest possible co-operation with the British Navy; he had obtained from the Admiralty a wealth of information of the most secret character. There had indeed been no secrets between the two services.

Sims had made many recommendations, after consultation with the British, most of these urging that naval assistance be given in the war zone; in which the greater part of the allied forces were naturally British.

Sims had placed his forces under the operational command of the senior allied officer in each area, who was often British.

Sims had urged that the officers and men of the American Navy be permitted to accept the same allied decorations for distinguished service or acts of valour, that were given to allied officers and men for acts of equivalent merit.

Finally, the British had proposed, that inasmuch as the United States had a large number of vessels operating in the critical areas of the war zone, which lay about the British Isles, Admiral Sims should be given an honourary membership on the Admiralty Board which directed all naval operations in those waters.

It is a curious type of mind that can make a formidable indictment of what constitutes almost treasonable disloyalty out of such facts. It should be remembered, moreover, that Mr. Daniels knew all these things when he wrote his letter of July 22, 1919. He was no less familiar with them when he said in his Annual Report to the President of December 1, 1919:

"In the Allied Naval Council, Admiral Wm. S. Sims, who had been the able representative of the Navy in Europe during the entire war, displayed ability of the highest order. His brilliant services abroad won world wide admiration and he demonstrated that he is worthy of the highest honours Congress can confer upon him."

Nor was Mr. Daniels unfamiliar with Admiral Sims' relations with the British, when he said in his Annual Report for 1918:

"Abroad the American Navy has given a demonstration, which can be characterized only as wonderful, of its readiness to join with our associates in teamwork for the common end and the common good."

. . . . . .

"The outstanding accomplishment of the Navy abroad in this war, outside of rigorous and valorous service in the danger zone, has been the character and degree of co-operation and practical consolidation for the time being of our service with those services with which we have been associated. The Navy, beginning with the arrival of the first ship abroad, has stood out for unity of command, even though this in some instances involved sacrificing temporarily something of our identity as an

independent service. This has not been an easy task. It is believed to be a safe statement that the degree of accomplishment of our service in this respect is without precedent in allied warfare. This vitally important co-operation has been accomplished and continually maintained not only without friction but with a steadily increasing development of good feeling and understanding.

"When the President determined upon the policy of arming merchant ships, the Chief Executive decided to send a naval officer of high rank to Great Britain to be the representative of the Navy and in the war zone and keep the department posted upon all problems connected with possible naval participation in the great war. The choice fell upon Rear Admiral William S. Sims, easily one of the most intellectual, gifted and distinguished officers of the Navy. During his long service he had won high place in the estimation of naval experts in this country and abroad. Rear Admiral Sims was at that time president of the Naval War College. His knowledge of gunnery and seamanship were equaled only by his proficiency in diplomacy, strategy and tactics. In recognition of the important services he has rendered as commander of the European Forces, the President last year promoted him to be a vice admiral and will shortly give him another promotion to the rank of admiral.

"It is too early yet to give proper place to the high character of the work done by Vice Admiral Sims and the other naval officers abroad, but all the world knows of the enthusiasm and the ability and spirit of co-operation which have enabled them to win a place for the Navy abroad higher than ever before accorded to it."

On May 1, 1919, Mr. Daniels' ideas about Admiral Sims' relations with the British were very similar to those expressed in the quotations from his annual reports cited above. In the report of the *London Times* of Mr. Daniels' remarks in addressing a London audience during his visit to Great Britain there occurs the following passage:

"The ships of the two navies had different flags, but they were united in everything and they might as well have sailed

under one flag. They were united in sentiment and in valour and their flag was that of the Anglo-Saxon people fighting for Anglo-Saxon liberty. Their men had brought back a spirit of comradeship, and to the motto 'Match the Navy' might be added today another, 'Hands across the sea and brotherhood with Great Britain.'

"Ten years ago Admiral Sims, speaking at a banquet in London, made a speech in which he said that if the time ever came when the soil of Great Britain was threatened with invasion the American people would fight with the English people, shoulder to shoulder. Nor did they forget that the Admiral was rebuked for that speech; for the President in pursuance of policy sent him a formal reprimand. That reprimand, in the light of this hour, was a decoration of honour.

"He rejoiced that in this co-operation with the British Navy, the Navy of the United States was represented here by a courageous, a wise and a brave man, who understood the very heart of the struggle and who entered into it with sympathy and the heartiest feeling for his British comrades."

XI

Secretary Daniels time and again said that Admiral Sims sought foreign decorations. Yet he must have known that Admiral Sims is opposed to all decorations and that his opposition has long been a matter of official record in the Navy Department. Admiral Sims has never worn the ribbons that indicate the possession of a decoration.

Admiral Sims had indeed requested that our men in the war zone be permitted to accept allied decorations. The Navy Department had provided no recognition for distinguished or heroic service. Our men were working with allied navies whose personnel were receiving medals for acts no more meritorious than those of men of the American forces. Admiral Sims felt that it would stimulate the morale of the American forces if they were permitted to receive recognition. This permission was refused, however, by Mr. Daniels.

Our naval forces, and those of the British, were practically the only ones operating in the North Sea, in the Channel and in the area south of Ireland in which the trade routes focused. The British had a far greater number of naval vessels in this area than we. The Board of Admiralty controlled the operations of these British forces. The actual operations of American forces operating in British waters consequently rested also under the direction of the Board of Admiralty, in the same way that American divisions in France, and indeed the whole American Army, operated under the orders of Marshal Foch. The Admiralty proposed, therefore, that Sims be made an honorary member of the Board, with a voice and vote, in order that the American Navy could have direct representation in the body that exercised the supreme naval command in British waters. French and Italian admirals fully agreed to the proposal, though they were not given membership for the simple reason that no Italian or French forces were operating in the North Sea or in the seas around Britain. The Navy Department refused to permit Admiral Sims to accept this position, and thus prevented their own representative from having a larger influence in the body that controlled the operations of many American vessels.

Mr. Daniels said in regard to this refusal:

"Admiral Sims' highest and dearest ambition, it would appear, was blasted when this government gently but firmly declined to permit him to become a member of the British Admiralty."

More errant nonsense was never spoken!

XII

The extent to which Admiral Sims influenced British and allied naval policy has not been realized in this country. Far from merely repeating to Washington ideas he had picked up from the British, Sims from the first had played

a most important part in bringing about a better realization of the situation in the war zone, and more effective measures to cope with that situation. The officers and men who served in the Naval Headquarters in London know from their own experience, as does the author of this volume, that the chief contribution of the American Navy to the allied victory was the sending of Admiral Sims abroad. From the very first his advice was eagerly sought and often followed by the heads of the Allied navies. To him, more than to any other one man, was due the adoption of the convoy system by the British, the rapid extension of the use of depth charges, of listening devices and of other successful anti-submarine methods.

Far from being a mental parasite, clinging to the barnacles of the Admiralty, Admiral Sims gave many ideas to the Allies. Most of the recommendations, which he cabled home, were not at all mere expressions of what the British wanted. They were decisions reached after full discussion with both the French and the British, a discussion in which the initiative and leadership often rested with the American representative.

Admiral Jellicoe, in his recently published book, *The Crisis of the Naval War*, has fully acknowledged the services Sims rendered in the Councils of the Allies. He says for example:

"Vice Admiral Sims had arrived in this country in April, 1917. . . . He came to visit me at the Admiralty immediately after his arrival in London, and from that day until I left the Admiralty at the end of the year, it was my privilege and pleasure to work in the very closest possible co-operation with him. My friendship with the Admiral was of very long standing. We had during many years exchanged views on different naval subjects, but principally on gunnery questions. I, in common with other British officers who had the honour of his acquaintance, had always been greatly struck by his wonderful success in the past of Inspector of Target Practice in the United States Navy. That success was due, not only to his knowledge of gunnery, but

also to his attractive personality, charm of manner, keen sense of humour and his quick and accurate grasp of any problem with which he was confronted. It was fortunate, indeed, for the allied cause that Admiral Sims should have been selected to command the United States Forces in European waters, for, to the qualities mentioned above he added a habit of speaking his mind with absolutely fearless disregard of the circumstances."

. . . . . .

"Very fortunately for the Allied cause, a most distinguished officer of the United States Navy, Vice-Admiral W. S. Sims, came to this country to report on the situation and to command such forces as were sent to European waters. Admiral Sims, in his earlier career before reaching the flag list, was a gunnery officer of the very first rank. He had assimilated the ideas of Sir Percy Scott of our own Navy, who had revolutionized British naval gunnery, and he had succeeded. in his position as Inspector of Target Practice in the United States Navy, in producing a very marked increase in gunnery efficiency. Later when in command, first of a battleship, then of the destroyer flotillas, and finally as head of the United States Naval War College, his close study of naval strategy and tactics had peculiarly fitted him for the important post for which he was selected, and he not only held the soundest views on such subjects himself, but was able, by dint of the tact and persuasive eloquence that had carried him successfully through his gunnery difficulties, to impress his views on others."

Indeed, it may be said that Admiral Sims fought the overconservatism of the Admiralty with the same energy, and with more success than attended his representations to the Navy Department. Far from "genuflecting" to British views he very successfully opposed many of them, and succeeded in bringing about a much more effective conduct of the war as a whole.

XIII

The third point which the Secretary repeatedly emphasized and to which he devoted much time was his assertion

that Admiral Sims had failed to appreciate the importance of protecting the American troops from submarine attack.

Admiral Sims himself effectively disposed of this assertion, as the following quotation from his rebuttal statement demonstrates:

"The statements and implications of the Secretary of the Navy, with regard to my attitude toward the protection of troops in the danger zone are characteristic of the kind of misinterpretation and misrepresentation into which the Secretary has, unfortunately, so often fallen in his attempts to deal with technical military matters, which he does not understand. . . . He declared that I failed to appreciate that the protection of troop transports was my paramount duty until he (the Secretary) had cabled me peremptorily that this was my main mission. I invite the committee to try and imagine an officer, who was responsible for the safety of our troops, failing to appreciate the necessity for protecting them.

"Running throughout the Secretary's statement is the repetition of this assertion. For example, he refers to my 'one idea, and controlling idea, of carrying on the war by putting all our destroyers at Queenstown, giving priority to protection of merchant ships over that of troop transports.' Again, the Secretary of the Navy, in referring to the question of transportation of troops, said:

"'The great machinery of troop transportation, the cruiser and transport force, was initiated by the Navy Department, built up, organized and operated, not by Admiral Sims, but by other officers not under his command. His duty in this connection consisted solely in arranging routes and providing escort vessels through the submarine zone, and in the performance of this latter and vitally important duty he had to be reminded time and again by the Department — bear this in mind now, gentlemen, with reference to the duty of protecting American troops in transport through the submarine zone, Admiral Sims had to be reminded time and again by the Department — that the paramount duty of our destroyers, with which nothing must interfere, was the fullest protection of ships carrying American troops.'

"In this same connection the Secretary also said: 'The Navy Department, from the moment it was entrusted with this task, regarded the protection and successful operation of these troop ships as its highest duty. Regarding human life as more valuable than supplies, I do not share the view of Admiral Sims that the escort of cargo ships was quite as important as the protection of vessels carrying troops.'

"And . . . 'I found it necessary, soon after troop transportation began, to remind him sharply that the first duty of American destroyers in European waters was to protect ships carrying American troops. I could not conceive that an American admiral, charged with such high responsibility, could regard supplies as of more value than human life, and cargo vessels more important, for any reason, than ships carrying American troops.'

"Again . . . the Secretary said: 'If I had believed, Mr. Chairman, that Admiral Sims cherished any such idea; that he valued supplies more than the lives of American soldiers; that he was willing to endanger troop transports in order to save cargo ships, he would have been instantly removed from command.'

"These instances that I have quoted are only a few of the many similar statements found throughout the testimony of the Secretary. There are certain considerations in this connection that should be made perfectly clear.

"At the time I went abroad, and our forces began to arrive in European waters, no troops were being sent from the United States to France, and the primary mission of the vessels in the early months, before the troop movements began, was necessarily the protection of merchant shipping and offensive operations against enemy submarines. As soon as I was informed that troop movements were to begin, I made every effort to induce the department to draw up adequate plans to insure the protection of the transport of these troops. As I have already told you, the first troop convoy was sent to France on plans drawn up hastily in Washington, without consultation or consideration of allied war experiences, and in consequence the first troop convoys narrowly escaped disaster. In my letters and cables at the time I pointed out to the Department, in the strongest possible terms,

the necessity and importance of adequately protecting American troops on the high seas. The Department finally requested me to submit full plans for the handling, routing and protecting of troop convoys through the war zone. These plans I drew up. They were accepted by the Department, put into operation, and throughout the remainder of the war governed the whole of our troop transportation in the war zone. At no time were any of our troop transports, escorted by American forces, successfully attacked by submarines.

" This shows that in no case was the protection afforded them inadequate. The disposition of our naval forces in European waters was made by me, and all our plans and arrangements for handling troops were made before I received any of the admonitions which the Secretary said he had to send to me as peremptory orders. Not a single one of the plans that had been made, not a single detail in the disposition of forces, not a single detail of the convoy operations, was changed in the slightest degree as a result of, or after, these so-called peremptory orders were received from the Navy Department; and this for the simple reason that it was unnecessary that any such changes should be made. The arrangements that had been made were adequate, as was amply demonstrated by the results. Only four or five convoys were attacked, no torpedo ever touched a loaded transport, not a single soldier was lost under the protection I gave them.

" I, of course, realized at the time that these messages were simply the result of nervousness in official quarters, the result of the inevitable misunderstandings and misconceptions of the naval situation at the ' front.'

" In repeated letters to the Navy Department, which I have read you, and to officers in the Department, in June and July, 1917, and at later dates, I called attention to the fact that my primary duty was the protection of American troops, and that the forces under my command had received instructions based upon this mission. Not only was there never, at any time, any question in the forces in Europe as to this primary mission, but you will find it clearly defined in my instructions to my subordinate commanders. The messages of the Secretary, inspired by a

natural anxiety, due to a lack of knowledge of the situation and the dispositions which had been made, were therefore wholly unnecessary. No further action, in any event, could have been taken, than the measures already in operation.

"Throughout the war, and since the war, and during this testimony, I have never stated that I considered that merchandise was of more value than human lives, nor have I ever stated that I considered the protection of a merchant ship to be more important than the protection of a troop ship.

"As a matter of fact, the plans of the convoy and protection of troops in the war zone were all drawn up at my headquarters in London. The routing of all these troops was handled, either directly by my staff in London, or by Admiral Wilson at Brest, acting under my general directions. The Secretary himself has told you how successful were the efforts of the forces under my command, and thereby refutes his contention that troops were not adequately protected. . . . He said:

"'The carrying to Europe and the bringing home of two million troops of the American Expeditionary Force has been justly termed the biggest transportation job in history. They had to be transported three thousand miles through submarine infested zones, facing the constant menace of an attack from an unseen foe, as well as the perils of war time navigation. Yet not one troop ship was sunk on the way to France, and not one soldier aboard a troop ship manned by the United States Navy lost his life through enemy action. That achievement had never been equalled. It was not only the most important but the most successful operation of the war. . . . The Germans never believed it could be done. . . . The sinking of our transports would have been the most telling blow the Germans could have dealt the Allies,— the greatest victory of their submarine warfare.'

"That they failed to sink a single allied United States troop ship and sank only three ships of other nationalities carrying American troops was not due to any lack of intention or effort, but to the fact that we gave our troop ships such efficient protection that it was almost impossible for the U-Boats to sink them.

"This success was the result of the disposition of forces I

made for the protection of our troops, and this disposition was not changed. With regard to the Secretary's statement that I had to be repeatedly reprimanded in a similar way throughout the war for failing to realize the necessity of protecting troops, let me say that the two nervous messages quoted by the Secretary, one in July, 1917, the other in May, 1918, were the only messages of this character that I ever received.

Department's Failure to Recognize Necessity of Protecting Merchant Tonnage

"There is another aspect to the situation which has been similarly misrepresented. Previous to the first of April, 1918, the number of troops sent from America to Europe had amounted in all to only about 300,000. It had taken nine months to get these 300,000 men to Europe. There were seldom more than two or three troop convoys each month, on an average, during these nine months. While it was recognized that it was the paramount mission of the forces overseas to protect these troops while en route through the war zone, other considerations could not be neglected. These convoys during these nine months were always fully protected. At least three times as many destroyers, per convoy escorted, were assigned to the duty of escorting them than were ever assigned to any merchant convoys, although the merchant convoys usually had from five to ten times as many ships as the troop convoys. No troop transport was sunk during this period while en route to France.

"It should be unnecessary, however, to state again that the submarine campaign against merchant tonnage constituted, at this time, the greatest threat to the allied cause. If sufficient merchant ships had been sunk by the submarines in 1917, the Allies would have been forced to make peace, and all of the American effort would have been in vain, so far as assisting the Allies was concerned. Therefore, while it was important — and all important — to protect the American troops, it was also vitally important to protect the merchant shipping which was carrying supplies and war materials for these troops, for the troops of the Allied armies, and for the civilian populations of the Allied countries. My problem was not only to protect American troops, but

also to safeguard, so far as I could, Allied lines of communication.

"The forces were consequently so located, in 1917, as to give the maximum possible protection to merchant convoys as well as to troops. Our destroyers escorted ten merchant convoys for every troop convoy during these early nine months, before our troop movements really began. Without the assistance they gave, it is very probable that the allied countries would have been forced into an unsatisfactory peace. This was, throughout 1917, the Allies' greatest anxiety. The repeated statements that I received from the Department indicated that they were considering, not the protection of the whole of the allied shipping, but were concentrating their efforts in protecting American shipping alone. They seemed constantly to fail to realize that our Army in France, and the cause for which we were fighting, was dependent upon the whole of the allied shipping. At this time, in 1917, the American shipping in the war zone was only a very small part of the whole of the allied shipping. Any protection to American ships, however adequate, would not therefore have saved the Allies, if the measures adopted had not protected also the whole of the allied shipping.

"The criticisms of the Secretary of the Navy of my attitude in this regard are in reality a condemnation of the attitude which the Department took at that time. I realized to the full, just as thoroughly as any official in Washington, the necessity of giving our troop ships priority over all other vessels in the war zone in the matter of escort, and they were given this priority. I also realized, what the Department seems to have failed to realize, and what the Secretary in his testimony completely ignored, and that was that we were not fighting the war alone, that our cause was inseparably bound up with the cause of the Allies, that the defeat of the Allies might very well have involved our defeat, and that the only means of insuring an allied victory was to maintain and protect their overseas communications, their supply lines, as well as our American troop transports. Consequently, the forces under my command, during the first nine months, were engaged most of the time in protecting these supply lines, not because they were neglecting the protection of troops,

but because at this time our troop convoys were so few and so far between that if our forces had been reserved for the protection of them alone, it is very probable that the Allies would have been defeated or forced into an unsatisfactory peace before the American effort on the Western Front could become effective. Too much stress cannot be laid upon this point."

CHAPTER XX

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF MR. DANIELS' OWN SUMMARY OF HIS EVIDENCE

I

IN concluding his direct testimony on May 20, 1920, the Secretary made a general summary of his case and of the evidence presented by himself and the witnesses called at his request, to refute the charges of Admiral Sims. No better proof of the correctness of the points established by Admiral Sims can be imagined than is afforded by a critical study of the Secretary's own summation of his own defence.

Before going into this, it is advisable to state once again the specific counts in the indictment actually brought by Admiral Sims against Mr. Daniels and his administration of the Navy Department. These Admiral Sims stated, in beginning his own testimony on March 9, 1920, in the following brief and concise form.

"Let me point out, in the simplest and clearest possible manner, the paramount motive by which my letter was inspired. It is this: We entered a great war. The war was won, thanks to a combination of circumstances which it would be entirely unsafe and unwise to depend upon in future. From the United States naval standpoint, the prosecution of the war involved numerous violations of well-recognized and fundamental military principles, with which every student of naval warfare is familiar.

"Briefly stated, they were:

"*First.* Unpreparedness, in spite of the fact that war had been a probability for at least two years and was, in fact, imminent for many months before its declaration.

"*Second.* That we entered it with no well considered policy

or plans, and with our forces on the sea not in the highest state of readiness.

"*Third.* That, owing to the above conditions and to the lack of proper organization of our Navy Department, and perhaps to other conditions with which I am not familiar, we failed, for at least six months, to throw our full weight against the enemy; that during this period we pursued a policy of vacillation, or, in simpler words, a hand-to-mouth policy, attempting to formulate our plans from day to day based upon an incorrect appreciation of the situation. . . .

"I am convinced that our failure to give adequate support, with the means at our disposal, during these first six months seriously and unnecessarily jeopardized the outcome of the whole war. I believe that this failure, combined with the equally grave one of neglecting to prepare adequately, . . . probably postponed victory four months. Since the average loss of life per day was about 3,000 and the total daily cost was more than $100,000,000, it can be appreciated what this delay meant to humanity and how serious was any fault that resulted in materially prolonging hostilities.

"*I wish particularly to emphasize that it is to this early period that my letter principally refers.*

". . . My sole object in submitting my letter to the Department was, not to demonstrate who was right and who was wrong, but rather to insure so thorough an appreciation of our errors, before time had obscured them, that the chances of repeating them would be minimized, if not eliminated, in the future.

"In other words, gentlemen, let me state as forcibly as I can that in this entire question I have no object other than that of the future efficiency of the naval service and the safety of the country. I am at the end of my career. I have everything to lose and nothing to gain. There is no possible question of my having a grievance. There is absolutely no question of personalities."

II

When one keeps this clear statement of the issues in mind and returns to a consideration of the testimony of the

Secretary, but one conclusion can be drawn. An examination of the concluding summary of Secretary Daniels' statement completely confirms the judgment that his defence was based altogether on diversions, evasions and misrepresentations.

It must have seemed to Mr. Daniels that ultimate success is a sufficient excuse for any failure or mistakes, no matter how disastrous these might have been under less fortunate circumstances. No other explanation can be offered for the following statement in his summary:

"The war was won, and that the Navy did its full share toward that great result has been fully established. That it was 100 per cent. perfect, that no mistakes were made, no one for a moment contends."

The Secretary continued, with an assertion that fairly outdoes his previous claims:

"It has been established that fewer mistakes were made in plans, policy and operations, than were made by any other navy or by our own Navy in any previous war. The testimony proves that no department of our own or any other government functioned more efficiently, made decisions more promptly or put them into execution more swiftly or successfully."

Whether the testimony "proves" such an astonishing exhibition of infallible and instantaneous efficiency on the part of Mr. Daniels' department can be easily determined by an examination of that testimony.

III

Continuing with his statement, the Secretary proceeded to enumerate the achievements of the Navy in the war. It is to be remarked that nearly all of the achievements enumerated by Mr. Daniels relate to events in the last half of the war, i. e., in 1918.

Thus, he referred to the transport of 2,000,000 troops abroad " without loss," as " the outstanding accomplishment of the war." Until April, 1918, a year after we entered the war, only 300,000 troops had been sent to France. After that date an average of 300,000 men were sent monthly, as opposed to an average of 25,000 per month for the first year of our intervention.

The Secretary spoke of the operation of cargo transports by the Naval Overseas Transportation Service. This was not even organized until January 9, 1918, nine months after war began.

The Secretary referred to the fact that few of our own ships with armed guards were sunk in the war zone. This is not surprising, as in 1917, at the time of the heaviest sinkings, only 5 per cent. of the total shipping traversing the war zone was American.

IV

The Secretary asserted that our wholehearted co-operation with the Allies, from the beginning, was proven by the conferences held with the British and French local naval commanders in the western Atlantic in April, 1917. Yet at those conferences the Allies had been told that our Navy was to be held intact on the Atlantic coast; that a few destroyers would be sent to the war zone only " to show the flag "!

The Secretary contended that the 28 destroyers that reached the war zone in the first three months of the war, were all that were needed. Yet on May 3, the allied missions had told him that a hundred anti-submarine vessels were needed at once. There were then 55 such vessels in Admiral Wilson's force patrolling the Atlantic coast; but it was many months before they were sent abroad.

The Secretary asked himself, " Did we send to Europe as many ships and men as we should or could have sent? " and

answered to his own satisfaction by telling how many men and ships we had abroad, not in April or July or November, 1917, but on November 11, 1918. He also told how many hundreds we were building — not in 1917 — but at the time of the armistice.

Similarly, the Secretary queried himself with, "Did we delay the putting into effect of the convoy system?" and replied that the Allies had not used convoy until May, 1917; that "eminent naval authorities (i. e. Benson) doubted whether it could be made a success;" that "the President and myself favoured it from the beginning," and that "we put it into effect soon after the British did." Then follows a curious bit of reasoning. "Admiral Sims himself," declared Mr. Daniels, "says our vessels made it possible to put the convoy system into effect. Could that have been possible if we had 'resisted' or sought in any way to prevent its adoption?" Admiral Sims' point had been that, just as the convoy system had been finally established in September, 1917, with our indispensable help, so it could have been established in May, 1917, if our help had been forthcoming then instead of months later.

V

The Secretary noted with satisfaction the adherence of the Navy in the war to the principle of unity of command, forgetting, apparently, for the moment, that this was a policy established by Admiral Sims; and that he himself had severely condemned Admiral Sims only a few moments before of disloyalty for carrying into effect that very principle.

The Secretary answered the next question — "Did the Navy Department, as Admiral Sims charges, fail to give him its confidence and support,"— by saying "It did not." In substantiation of this flat denial, he said: "We gave every *consideration* to his recommendations, and most but not all of them were adopted." Yet Mr. Daniels carefully avoided

adding, that this "consideration" was so very careful and undecisive that it often continued for six months and that the recommendations were adopted only after delays averaging many months, during the most critical period, the "crisis of the naval war," as Jellicoe called it.

VI

The Secretary said tugs and other small craft had not been sent abroad, as none were available, but that "we built new ones as fast as facilities in America could construct them." He failed to state that the Navy Department made no effort to construct tugs until January, 1918, nine months after the recommendation had been made.

The Secretary referred to the "establishment" of bases in France, declared that Sims had "objected," and that "we disregarded his protest and established bases at Brest, at Bordeaux, at St. Nazaire. . . . These bases, established without waiting for recommendations of Admiral Sims, became the centres of our activities." Admiral Sims never objected to the establishment of such bases. The Secretary "established" them on paper, in May, 1917, without informing Sims or the French as to what purpose the bases were to serve nor to what extent they were to be developed. Officers were sent, without any instructions as to what they were to do, to command bases that did not exist, and the utmost confusion resulted. The bases were not "established" except in Mr. Daniels' mind and in the Navy Directory, until months later, and then only by Admiral Sims' direction.

VII

Mr. Daniels then set himself an even more difficult question to answer. "Were there, as Admiral Sims would have you believe, no war plans worked out and no policy adopted before war was declared?"

Here the Secretary apparently realized what thin ice he was treading upon and refrained from a categoric answer. Instead, he quoted Admiral Badger's statement about the "Black" war plan and the steps which the General Board had recommended. Admiral Sims, however, had not said that there were no war plans, in a safe somewhere. He had only proven that we had no "well considered policy or plans," before war began, that were actually followed during the war. No officer claimed that the General Board's war plan was ever used, or that it ever came out of the safe where Admiral Rodman believed it to have been. The mysterious disappearance of the "plan" of February 17, 1917, which Mr. Daniels said was the especial plan we used in the war, may indicate, however, that it is doubtful whether the plans were even in the safe.

In speaking of the ignored memoranda of the General Board and their suggestions as to plans, Admiral Badger had said, with a touch of unconscious pathos, that plans had been prepared but "the trouble is that the plans and the execution of them did not meet with the approval of the critics."

The fact is that the only people in a position to act as critics to the General Board were the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Benson.

Yet the Secretary, carefully evading a direct statement, now said that Admiral Badger had testified "*that these recommendations, with few exceptions, were approved and put into effect is shown by events.*"

Rhetorically the Secretary continued "all this was in progress before Sims left for Europe. . . . How could he have been totally ignorant of all these plans? The General Board, as did every other official of the Navy, favoured the closest co-operation with the Allies, in case of war, and sending to Europe such craft as would be of most assistance to them, and aiding them in every way we could. That was our fixed policy, adopted and thoroughly understood."

After the testimony of Admiral Mayo, Admiral Badger, Admiral Benson and Captain Pratt, this is a most amazing assertion. For these officers, the commander-in-chief of the fleet, the chairman of the General Board, the Chief of Naval Operations and his assistant, testified that no such policy was "fixed," or "adopted" or "thoroughly understood." In fact all agreed that no one in the Navy Department, on April 6, 1917, had even the vaguest idea of what the Navy would do next, beyond getting behind nets to avoid being attacked by German submarines. No one, but Daniels, had cared to take such liberties with the facts of history.

VIII

"Another one of our policies," said the Secretary, "was to increase the Navy in ships and personnel, especially anti-submarine craft, as rapidly as possible."

Yet it was not until July 20, 1917, that the officers in the Navy Department succeeded in convincing Secretary Daniels that the Navy should concentrate its naval construction on the most effective type of anti-submarine craft, destroyers. It was not until October 6, 1917, that the war program of destroyers was authorized. In fact on July 20, 1917, over three months after war began, Admiral McKean considered it necessary to address a memorandum to the Secretary, the last of a score that had been sent him since February on the same subject, in which the following statements occur:

"With an earnestness beyond expression, backed by a conviction that has endured from the first, I ask that we meet this great world crisis by contributing our maximum national effort in building, manning and fighting destroyers to drive enemy submarines from the sea. . . .

"The question of types may rest for the moment *while we make the great decision to do our utmost.* Let it not be said by posterity that we, seeing our duty, hesitated until too late, or that we failed to distinguish essential from incidental effort. Two

hundred destroyers would mean victory for us. They may be had within a year and a half. *The power to accomplish will follow the decision to accomplish. Let us decide!*"

Admiral Sims, in quoting this memorandum, said:

"Here Admiral McKean states what is, in brief terms, the whole point of the criticism directed against the Department's conduct of the war. They did fail to distinguish essential from incidental effort. They failed to act upon the very policy which President Wilson so forcibly set forth in his message to me and in his speech of August 11, 1917."

Yet on May 21, 1920, Secretary Daniels told the Senate committee that if in March, 1917, Sims didn't know the Department had war plans and policies, all "designed for the war we were to wage and to meet the conditions we were facing," and if he didn't know that it was energetically carrying these out, "he was the only man in America who was in ignorance of the active and efficient work and policy of the Navy Department."

If the Secretary had bothered to read their testimony, he would have discovered that Benson, McKean, Pratt, Mayo, Palmer, Taussig, Laning, were as ignorant as Sims of these war plans and this active and efficient work of the "Navy Department." As individuals, many officers in the Department were doing active and efficient work. But their chief obstacle, as all testified, was the "Navy Department" itself.

IX

One criticism the Secretary proudly admitted. "Admiral Sims charges that we did not allow him to select flag officers who were to serve in Europe. That is correct; we did not. We had no idea of allowing him to determine which admirals should go to Europe and which should not. . . . No military rule was violated by the Department in this, because Admiral Sims was not Commander-in-Chief, though he de-

sired such position and the Department declined his request."

The last sentence is an altogether petty and malicious insinuation. Admiral Sims never requested that he be appointed "Commander-in-Chief," nor did he ever express, verbally or in writing, any desire for such a position.

The principle involved is clear. Though Admiral Sims was not "commander-in-chief" of the Atlantic Fleet, he was most decidedly our naval commander in the war zone. No mere quibble can exempt the Secretary from conviction for the violation of so fundamental a principle of war as to refuse to permit the commander in the war zone to select, or even to ask him to suggest, his principal subordinates.

Admiral Benson complained that he, too, had often not been consulted about even the most important appointments to naval commands made by the Secretary. Benson was moreover, the chief military adviser of the Secretary. Captain Pratt stated the principle, to which every one who knows the rudiments of warfare subscribes, when he said that "It is the universal practice of the Navy for flag officers to make the recommendations for their subordinates. The final assignments are made by the Secretary in consultation with the Chief of Naval Operations. It is conducive to efficiency to associate those officers together whose relations are bound to be harmonious."

Mr. Daniels protested that "we had no idea of allowing him to choose his personal favourites for important commands." Quite apart from the fact that Sims is not the type who would play favourites, the Navy and the country know that they would have been far better served by his favourites than by the personal selections of Mr. Daniels.

X

Said Daniels:

"The work of the Navy was stupendous and mistakes were unavoidable; but I feel sure the testimony has not only confirmed

the general impression of the splendid work done by the Navy but has given an even clearer and more impressive exhibition of the efficiency with which the Navy did its work of preparation for war and operations during the war."

If by the "Navy" he means the naval officers and men, one can most heartily agree, as did Admiral Sims. If he includes himself and his chief naval supporters, his statement becomes merely ridiculous, in the face of the testimony under cross-examination of Admirals Benson and McKean and of Captain Pratt.

The Secretary, however, mentioned a few things that had been done. These were, in his own order:

1. Congress had authorized from 1913–1917 a total of a million tons of new naval vessels (three-fourths of which are not yet built in the year 1920).

2. The Bureau of Ordnance in 1913 was short 228,000 projectiles. In 1917 it had a reserve of 112,000. The reserve of torpedoes had been increased 9½ times, of smokeless powder 1½ times, of mines, 4½ times.

3. The enlisted personnel authorized was: in 1913, 51,500; in 1917, 97,000. (This increase was not authorized until August 29, 1916, less than six months before war began; too late to be of any service at the beginning of the war.) Mr. Daniels refused in 1914 and 1915 to request the additional 20,000 men that would have insured the manning of the active Navy in 1917.

4. There was no naval reserve in 1913. In 1917, it was in existence (also authorized August 29, 1916, and hence in April, 1917, still untrained and unorganized).

5. "The organization of 1917 was far superior to that of 1913." (The only change made had been the creation of the Office of Naval Operations in March, 1915, and the enlargement of its functions in August, 1916, at the initiative of Admiral Fiske and against the opposition of Secretary Daniels.)

These five measures were all that Mr. Daniels could cite in the way of preparedness before 1917. How could any

more convincing proof be requested of his failure to pay heed to his primary duty,— that of preparing the Navy for war at a time of world upheaval?

Mr. Daniels' state of mind in 1920 can be judged from the fact that he said of the above evidences of war preparations:

"Such enormous undertakings were put through during the war that we are now apt to be little impressed by the accomplishments of the period preceding the war, and figures such as are given above are needed to remind us that the pre-war achievements, in the direction of preparation for war, were also enormous, compared with anything that had preceded them."

The Great War did not begin until 1914. It was hardly even a threat until 1913. Although we were facing war between 1914 and 1917, so little had been done to prepare for "any eventuality" that the actual preparedness measures, cited by Mr. Daniels himself, can be counted on the fingers of one hand; and his initiative even in these was not established by the evidence. In the cases of the increases in personnel, and the improvement in organization, he had originally bitterly opposed the steps finally taken.

XI

Toward the end of his summary of the case for the defence, the Secretary became unconsciously ludicrous in his assertions. Thus spake Sir Josephus:

"I am loath to believe that Admiral Sims believed in 1917 that the department was making fundamental errors in the conduct of the war. *Certainly he never came out openly and straightforwardly with any such opinion at the time.* It is difficult even now to read by implication any such meaning into his numerous cablegrams and letters *Had he felt that way it was his duty to bring his opinion clearly and sharply before his superiors.*"

Can it be possible that the Secretary of the Navy had not read Admiral Sims' communications either in 1917, or in 1920, when he presented many of them in his testimony? From the end of April, 1917, for many months, Admiral Sims was pointing out to the Navy Department, at least weekly, and often daily, in the most strongly worded cables and letters, compatible with official proprieties, these very same fundamental errors of the Navy Department. Indeed so strong were these in their tone that Captain Pratt, in his testimony, said they would have had more effect if they had not been so forceful.

On April 28, 1917, when the Navy Department was concerned chiefly with protecting the American coast, with Admiral Wilson's patrol force of 55 vessels, and of keeping the American fleet intact in port, Admiral Sims cabled:

"Owing to the gravity of the submarine situation, although I am unaware of the situation as regards our forces available and their material condition, I cannot avoid urging the importance of the time element and the fact that the pressing need of the moment is numbers of vessels in the danger area. We cannot send too soon or too many. . . . At present none (i. e., German submarines) are likely to be sent over (to the American coast). . . . I believe our Navy has an opportunity for glorious distinction and I seriously recommend that there be sent at once the maximum possible number of destroyers."

On June 21, 1917, nearly two months later, Admiral Sims cabled:

"I trust I have made the critical nature of the military situation entirely clear. I consider it my duty to report that if we cannot offer more immediate actual assistance even to the extent of sending the majority of the vessels patrolling our own coast lines which cannot materially affect the general situation, we will fail to render the service to the allied cause which future history will show to have been necessary. . . .

". . . Armed merchantmen are being sunk daily off this port.

The success of the convoys so far brought in shows that the system will defeat the submarine campaign if applied generally *and in time. . . . The present campaign is not succeeding.* The necessity is again presented of sending all destroyers, tugs, yachts and other craft which can reach the critical area by themselves or towed part way by reserve battleships. *If the situation is not made clear, I hope the Department will indicate the future information desired. Time is a vital element in any measures taken.*"

A score of other messages of similar import, all in substance a complete condemnation of the " safety first " policy then actuating the Navy Department, were quoted by Admiral Sims in his testimony. His letter reports of June 29, and of July 16, 1917, may be singled out as instances of letters that constitute in themselves the most striking indictment imaginable of the delays, inaction and timid prudence of the Navy Department in those first and most critical months of the war.

It is very hard to understand either the meaning or intent of Mr. Daniels' statement, that in 1917 Admiral Sims " never came out openly and straightforwardly " and pointed out to the department the errors it was committing.

XII

In the oratorical peroration with which the Secretary concluded his statement, he reiterated again his many misrepresentations. He recited his " pride " in the achievements of the Navy. He had only done his " solemn duty " to the officers and men of the service, in defending them from the " charges " which had " shocked " and hurt them. He spoke of having attended a memorial service, for some of the men who had died in the naval service, and said:

" If I had been silent when what these dead had done was assailed, I could not ever have stood with bared head over their

graves, without a sense that I had failed them and permitted unjust reflections to tarnish their fame."

If it were not that Daniels, in the heat of his ignorant and vindictive resentment at criticism, may have really believed that Admiral Sims had "assailed" the war record of the men of the Navy with "unjust reflections," this statement would seem a disgraceful sacrilege; a deliberate slander on the men who died across the seas and on their honoured and well beloved commander; a cowardly attempt to defend himself behind the cloak, of the deathless glory, of those who had died in their country's cause.

Mr. Daniels devoted two pages to fulsome praise of the Navy, and of the splendid service of its personnel in the war. Admiral Sims had done this more graphically — more powerfully — because he had done so with that sincerity, which forms, by contrast, so refreshing and so distinctive a characteristic of his personality.

Mr. Daniels having praised the officers and men of the Navy for two pages, revealed his purpose when he said:

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege to point out to this committee some of the notable deeds of our naval officers, who made a record so excellent that no criticisms or accusations have been able to leave a stain or even a speck upon that record. . . .

"To the American people . . . the Navy was their reliance when world justice was imperilled. They knew that it was ready, fit, efficient, and the history I have been privileged to present to your committee fully justified their faith. Indeed it crowns it."

For three years previous to April 6, 1917, the Secretary of the Navy had deceived the country, perhaps unintentionally or through ignorance, in his annual reports, by his publicity bureau, and through his speeches, as to the condition of the Navy. The people, as a result, "knew" nothing of the truth about the Navy in 1917, certainly not if they

believed the statements made to them at the time by the Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. Daniels was quite correct, in concluding his statement before the Senate Committee in 1920 with the admission that his testimony before the committee fully "crowns" his long series of previous statements about the Navy; but the implication of his statement doubtless escaped him.

CHAPTER XXI

A DANIELS COME TO JUDGMENT

(The Cross-Examination of the Secretary)

I

THE Secretary of the Navy had apparently noticed with dismay the admissions made by previous witnesses when they had been subjected to the searching and astute cross-examination of Senator Hale.

His own testimony, under cross-examination, reveals his obvious and stated intention to avoid at all costs any damaging admissions.

He refused throughout to make direct answers, or to admit anything. He repeated monotonously the phrases that had colored his direct statement. The charges "against the Navy," he said, were "preposterous and outrageous," a "crime" against the service. The only criticisms of the Navy had come from men with a "grievance"; officers inspired by "wounded vanity," by devious political motives, by a desire to "Prussianize the Navy." The Navy had fought magnificently in the war. All possible preparations had been made. Full and complete war plans were in existence. The Navy had never been so efficient as in April, 1917. The Department's policy from the beginning was whole-hearted co-operation with the Allies.

When Mr. Daniels was confronted with the evidence disproving in every case the impression that he was trying to convey, he evaded the issue and entered into interminable monologues on subjects entirely foreign to the questions asked him. When confronted with the proofs of the criti-

cisms contained in Admiral Sims' letter and testimony, he assailed Admiral Sims for attacking the Navy, declared the Navy had made a splendid record in the war and that though mistakes were made these were of no real consequence, as we had won the war.

In vain, Chairman Hale endeavoured to get the Secretary to answer the question asked him. Mr. Daniels obviously intended to tire out the committee by his evasions and verbose diversions and misrepresentations, and so to avoid having to make any direct answers.

For four days the Secretary was under cross-examination. It is with difficulty that one can find even a dozen direct answers to questions concerned with the issues of the investigation.

II

The Chairman began the cross-examination by stating that the committee deprecated the unfounded personal attacks upon certain of the witnesses. The committee, he said, were not at all concerned with the witnesses' opinions of each other, but only with the essential facts concerning our preparedness for war in 1917 and the Department's conduct of the war during the first six months after April 6, 1917.

The Chairman also invited the Secretary's attention to the fact that Admiral Sims' criticisms were not directed against the Navy itself.

The committee repeatedly felt obliged to protest against Mr. Daniels' tactics; but he defiantly announced that he would answer as he chose, that he was the Secretary of the Navy, and that if necessary he would remain before the committee all summer rather than give the direct answers they desired.

The Chairman repeatedly asked what war plans the Navy had in 1917. The Secretary in reply only quoted voluminously from the parts of testimony of Admiral Badger and

Captain Pratt, in which these officers had described the memoranda that had been drawn up by the General Board and by two or three officers in Operations in 1917, giving their own estimates of various problems and their recommendations. These were not in any sense of the word "war plans."

The "Black" war plan which the Secretary declared was a full and complete and up-to-date plan for war with Germany had not the slightest possible relation to the situation existent since 1914. The Black Plan provided only for a naval campaign in the Atlantic, by our major naval forces. It was based on the assumption that we would be fighting single-handed against a European enemy which could use its fleet freely in the Atlantic, and that the issue of war would centre chiefly in the Caribbean Sea.

III

Chairman Hale spent the best part of two days trying to get some proof from Mr. Daniels, of his repeated assertions that "we had plans for war with every nation in the Atlantic." The Secretary consistently refused to answer. Every time the question was raised, he began to read a few more pages of testimony that he thought could be construed as giving the impression that there had been in 1917 suitable war plans, officially approved by the Department, adequate to meet the situation that confronted us on April 6, 1917.

On the afternoon of May 21, when Chairman Hale, for example, asked the Secretary about the plans, Mr. Daniels, as usual, replied:

"Yes, we had plans for war with every nation in the Atlantic."

"*The Chairman:* And especially one for war with Germany?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Yes. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman that since the morning session I have had a conference with Admiral Badger . . . and he will be very happy . . . to bring

all the plans in executive session of the committee, so that you may see the plans (N. B. These were the so-called 'Black' plans, described above). . . . I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that this morning . . . I referred to a statement of Admiral Sims with reference to the fact that he had charged Admiral Benson with not having the will to win."

The Secretary then read a quotation from Admiral Sims in support of his own contention of the morning that Sims "made the grave and infamous charge that Admiral Benson lacked the will to win." In the morning the Chairman had pointed out that no such charge was contained in Admiral Sims' letter. Daniels then twisted about and said it was in his testimony, and that "It is as grave a crime in one place as in the other." The only substantiation the Secretary could find was a quotation which he now introduced, to divert attention from the embarrassing question about lack of plans. In this Admiral Sims had said:

"The spiritual foundation of every war is the will to victory and if any man, no matter how honest, has an invincible prejudice against the people we are fighting alongside of, it is very probable that it has an unconscious influence upon him; and that is the reason, that in submitting this letter for the consideration of the Navy Department, I put that — (i. e., Admiral Benson's admonition that 'we would as soon fight the British as the Germans') — in there, as one of the most important things in the letter, that if we ever go into a war again we want to make sure that the spiritual foundation of our organization, the will to victory, is sound."

The Chairman remarked after the Secretary had read this quotation:

"I do not think any one can question that. That is good doctrine, is it not?

"*Secretary Daniels:* But when you charge the Chief of Operations with not having the will to win, you charge him with a grave crime.

"*The Chairman:* I do not think it does charge him.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I think that would be the interpretation of it. I do not see any other interpretation of it."

The Chairman then quoted Admiral Sims' further statement which Mr. Daniels had omitted; namely that:

"I have always had the best possible relations with Admiral Benson. I regard him as an upstanding and honest man who has exceedingly strong convictions, and who is very firm in adherence to these convictions. I believe everything he has done, *during the war,* has been done conscientiously and to get along with the war."

IV

The Chairman, having thus disposed of Mr. Daniels' assertion about Admiral Sims' "grave and infamous charges" — came back to the question of plans. Whereupon Mr. Daniels began to read the General Board's recommendations of February 4th, 1917. These had never received any official approval from the Navy Department.

The Chairman therefore interrupted the Secretary, pointed out that the recommendations of Admiral Badger were already in the testimony and said:

"You see, you have already made your testimony in your direct statement, Mr. Secretary, and now I want to ask you some questions. It is no good to me if you do not answer my questions.

"*Secretary Daniels:* This is an answer to your question, because you raised the question of plans.

"*The Chairman:* I am in hopes of getting from you, before we get through, a statement of just what plans we had at the outbreak of war, and on February 2; and if you are not at liberty to give them out because they are confidential, I want the plans, to be mentioned as confidential, stated. This that you are reading has already been put into the record.

"*Secretary Daniels:* This is answering your question, and is

exceedingly important. . . . Here is what we did, and this is the detailed plan."

The Chairman said, "I am not asking you what was in the plan, but I am asking you about the plan, so that I can get it in my mind. . . . So far I have been unable to."

"*Secretary Daniels:* I am giving you that plan now," and he continued with the reading of it. When he had finished the Chairman asked:

"That was approved by you when?

"*Secretary Daniels:* I have not the date here, *but it was approved, as soon as it came to me.*" (i. e., on February 4, 1917).

"*The Chairman:* Does that appear on the plan?

"*Secretary Daniels: It was approved by me, Mr. Chairman. I do not see in this testimony the actual official action.*

"*The Chairman:* Then what became of it, after it was approved by you?

"*Secretary Daniels:* It went to Operations *to carry it out.*

"*The Chairman:* It went to Operations?

"*Secretary Daniels:* To carry it out."

Yet Admiral Badger in his testimony noted that in the case of this plan there was "no record of action by the Department." Neither he nor any other naval officer had ever heard of the memorandum having been "approved" by Mr. Daniels. Nor did any of the officers in Operations know anything about this General Board memorandum having been sent "to Operations to carry it out!"

V

For two more whole days, Chairman Hale vainly attempted to learn something of the plans. The Secretary stated under oath that the Navy Department had had detailed plans "always from the time the General Board was organized, up to this moment . . . which would cover a war with the Central Empire, with Germany, Yes, sir. . . .

". . . The General Board failed in nothing in the making of basic plans and policies recommended to the Department, *and the department failed in nothing in approving* the carrying out of these basic plans which set forth the essential policies that governed the Navy."

The Secretary again quoted Captain Pratt's personal, undated, unapproved memoranda as the "operative" plans of the Department. But no plans were forthcoming, and finally even the courteous patience of Chairman Hale was exhausted, and he insisted on an answer.

"*The Chairman:* I asked you, Mr. Secretary, whether in your opinion we had any plans for a war with Germany which would include the co-operation of the Allies with us, the war being the kind of a naval war which existed after 1916?

"*Secretary Daniels:* I decline ever to answer Yes or No in any investigation, Mr. Chairman. . . .

"*The Chairman:* This is a perfectly definite question.

"*Secretary Daniels:* Yes, and I will give you a perfectly definite answer, but you cannot tell me to answer Yes or no.

"*The Chairman:* You can answer whether there were such plans, in your opinion.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I have a right to answer as I please. Ask me questions and I will answer them all definitely and with fullness. . . .

"*The Chairman:* You must answer them, Mr. Secretary, in a way to give me the information I ask for.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I am the Secretary of the Navy and I shall answer you in accordance with the duty of my office, and fully. . . .

"*The Chairman:* I ask you questions, and I would not care if you would answer them so as to convey information, but that you do not do. I would much prefer to have you answer them in that way.

"*Secretary Daniels:* And I would much prefer not to be told how to answer questions."

Naturally! for Chairman Hale had assumed that the

Secretary was trying to aid the committee to learn the truth. The Secretary preferred his own methods!

VI

Another half day passed, and still the Secretary evaded questions, reading large masses of testimony into the record, without being willing himself to do anything more than make the general and unsupported assertion that "The *General Board* had perfect and full plans for 'a' war with the Germans." He was careful to state that it was the General Board and not the Navy Department, and that, it was a "plan" for "a" war with Germany. He knew there was no plan for "the war" which we actually fought with Germany.

Chairman Hale finally asked the Secretary:

"Now, from your answers am I to understand we were thoroughly prepared with plans for anti-submarine warfare or not, Mr. Secretary?

"*Secretary Daniels:* We were entirely prepared with plans for any kind of warfare the naval strategists could foresee.

"*Chairman:* For anti-submarine warfare?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Not specifically. Any kind, or every kind.

"*The Chairman:* Mr. Secretary, do you not think that as a committee we have a right to get information on these matters? You have told us they had ample plans. Now I want to know what those ample plans were.

"*Secretary Daniels:* Admiral Badger will present them whenever you send for them.

"*The Chairman:* You are the witness on the stand to answer this . . .

"*Secretary Daniels:* I know what you are asking me, but I know what I am answering you. You asked me if we had any plans. The dreadnaughts . . .

"*The Chairman:* Is it not your purpose to assist the committee in this investigation?

"*Secretary Daniels:* It is my purpose to get the committee the fullest possible information.

"*The Chairman:* Do you think we get the information, when you do not answer the questions?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Absolutely. I tell you we had plans for any kind of warfare, in the Black plans.

"*The Chairman:* It has been said that there seems to be a good deal of a smoke screen to keep from getting information. It seems to me that you are not in a position where you want anything of that sort. . . . You have stated, heretofore, that none of these charges against the Navy were substantiated at all; that the Navy Department was clear in every respect of any of those criticisms. Now that being the case, there can be nothing to hide in any way. I am sure you would not want to hide anything. You are the very last one to want that.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I have shown you this morning we have everything open.

"*The Chairman:* And it seems to me when we are asking for definite answers to questions that you should want to give them.

"*Secretary Daniels:* And I have answered them fully and given you all the plans.

"*The Chairman:* But you do not answer them so we can get any information from your answers.

"*Secretary Daniels:* If you cannot get any information from what I have answered you, I do not know where you will get it. It is very full and complete.

"*The Chairman:* Your answers have little to do with the questions and you put in a lot of additional testimony."

VII

For another day the testimony continued, with Mr. Daniels pursuing the same tactics. Again Senator Hale felt compelled to remonstrate.

The Secretary, in answer to a question as to why forces were not sent abroad immediately, in 1917, made a long statement, dealing with destroyer construction during the war, and with the total number that operated in Europe.

As he rambled on in his effort to confuse the minds of the committee, Senator Keyes finally asked:

"Mr. Chairman, I would just like, in order that we may try to keep in mind what is taking place before us here, to know what question the Secretary is answering now.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I am answering as to our destroyers.

"*The Chairman:* At the present rate, Mr. Secretary, we will be here all summer.

"*Secretary Daniels:* Well, I have my summer clothes.

"*The Chairman:* You answer very few of the questions that are asked of you, but you put in a lot of matter into the record that is highly irrelevant to the questions asked.

"*Secretary Daniels:* I have not put in anything that is not relevant.

"*The Chairman:* It may not be irrelevant to the investigation, but it is irrelevant to the questions.

"*Secretary Daniels:* It is absolutely relevant to the questions and necessary to give a clear answer.

"*The Chairman:* My idea was that when we examined you here we would get all the assistance that it was in your power to give in clearing up all these matters . . . as briefly as possible. . . . It seems to me that if you will bring your answers down to reasonable lengths and follow the lines we are trying to find out about, it would be very helpful and profitable. . . . Nobody wants to hide anything or to suppress any information, but I think that you ought to co-operate with us. . . . But every question we ask, you come out with a long statement, taking up all sorts of other matters and we never get anywhere."

VIII

Any one who has the patience to read the Secretary's answers to the questions put to him during the four days' cross-examination will appreciate the significance of this statement by the chairman of the investigating committee.

A further example of the Secretary's attitude is afforded by one of his answers on the last day of his examination.

Senator Hale had quoted from the testimony of previous witnesses proofs that the Navy was unprepared for war in 1917, that it was very short of men, that its ships were not materially fit for war service. The Secretary attempted to explain away these admissions.

"I would say that Admiral Benson's statement was this: — If you will bear in mind, Admiral Benson was answering questions you put to him. If you will read his testimony in full, in large, you will see that its whole bearing does not justify your picking out one or two questions, in answer to which he said that it was not 100 per cent. ready.

"*The Chairman:* Do you mean that my questions were improper questions?

"*Secretary Daniels:* Not at all; not at all. But suppose you asked me the question. 'Mr. Secretary, was every ship in the Navy, on the 6th of April fully manned, fully efficient, . . .' and I were to say to you, 'No!' — I am a little too foxy to be caught by such questions — then you would say, 'The Secretary of the Navy said the Navy was not ready.' Admiral Benson has told you truly that no Navy is ever 100 per cent. efficient, every ship is not 100 per cent. efficient; but I said in my statement, and it is as true as Holy Writ, 'the Navy from stem to stern had been made ready to the fullest possible extent,' and that is the truth."

The Secretary was too "foxy" to be caught answering questions directly!

IX

In the course of the Secretary's testimony, as has been related in Chapter XII, he was confronted by Senator Hale, both with his letter to the Senate of April 21, 1916, in which he declared that the General Board letter of August 1, 1914, did not relate to preparedness, and with the General Board letter itself. This was found to relate solely to preparedness.

Letters were also introduced explaining the disappear-

ance, from the Navy Department files, of Admiral Fiske's letter of November 9, 1914. In his letter to the Senate of April 21, 1916, the Secretary denied ever having seen the letter, and stated that it could not be found in the Department's files, as it had been removed by an officer.

Letters from Commander J. H. Sypher to Admiral Fiske showed that the Fiske letter had been removed from the files by the Secretary's aide for material, a man of German name, antecedents and sympathies and the officer in whom the Secretary reposed the most confidence. He had reported later that the letter had been lost. After the letter had been brought to light by the Senate request of April, 1916, the lost copy was mysteriously returned to the files and was later discovered bearing a receiving stamp dated September 13, 1916.

X

Mr. Daniels admitted that in 1913, he had forbidden the naval members of the Joint Board to attend meetings. The Secretary's explanation of this action was,

> "In the early part of the administration there was a very acute situation between a friendly power and the U. S. . . . About that time the Joint Army and Navy Board had made certain recommendations which, by some subterranean passage, became circulated upon the hill. . . . Its becoming public might have resulted in a very serious trouble with a friendly power. The recommendations of the Joint Army and Navy Board, which were most confidential became whispered about and discussed generally. . . . These would have been tantamount in the eyes of a friendly nation to our getting ready to go to war with it, and the Army and Navy Board held no meetings for a time."

This is an extraordinary statement for the head of the Navy to make. The Army and Navy Joint Board was the only agency to co-ordinate the plans and activities of the two services. A crisis with another nation had developed.

Because the Joint Board took steps that would have contributed to our preparedness and military success in the event of war, and for fear that the other nation would be displeased, the Joint Board was not permitted to meet or to draw up plans which would have enabled the two services to act together efficiently, in case war had been forced upon us. In a time of crisis Mr. Daniels' pacifism would have prevented our military forces from being able to co-operate with each other and to cope with the situation.

Mr. Daniels, in fact, added that he "instructed the naval members of the Board not to attend any further meetings until they were directed to do so, and it was all on account of very grave international questions. . . . When that international acute situation passed, the Joint Army and Navy Board resumed their meeting."

One is reminded of the old adage about locking the barn door, after the horse is stolen!

XI

On the final day of Secretary Daniels' cross-examination, the Chairman introduced into the record a copy of statistics, furnished officially by the Office of Naval Operations, relating to the state of preparedness in 1917. Senator Hale, in spite of almost hysterical opposition from the Secretary, who said he would have the matter carried to the floor of the Senate, also introduced a digest of these official statistics, that had been prepared in his own office. In presenting these for the record the Chairman said:

"This shows that on February 2, 1917, 26 per cent. of the fleet was reported fit in material, and 74 per cent. of the fleet had an average of 60 days of repairs, essential for war service, to be made. Only 2 per cent. of the vessels were fully manned and 98 per cent. of them averaged 50 per cent. manned.

"On April 6, 1917, that is 63 days later, 33 per cent. were reported as fit in material and 67 per cent. of the fleet had an

average of 56 days' repairs necessary (for war service) to be done. Only 10 per cent. of the vessels were fully manned, and 90 per cent. of them averaged but 57 per cent.

"In short these figures, presented by the Navy Department, showed that we went into the war with two-thirds of our fleet not in proper condition for instant war service abroad, and requiring two months of repair on an average, and with but 10 per cent. of the fleet up to their full war complement and 90 per cent. of it with less than 3/5 of its full war complement."

XII

It would be but useless repetition to delve further into the cross-examination of Mr. Daniels. In spite of all his evasions, vehement denials, and sweeping generalizations, which were in complete contradiction to the facts established from the previous testimony,— he confirmed, by inference, every single criticism of any importance contained in Admiral Sims' letter and in his testimony.

The Secretary's testimony was the most convincing evidence one could have for the necessity of a reorganization of the Navy Department, and for the adoption of a sound naval policy to guide the future development and operations of the Navy, our first line of national defence.

Unless this is done, unless the lessons of the war are heeded, we will gravely endanger the national security. Admirals Benson, McKean, Pratt, Badger, Sims, Plunkett, Mayo, all agreed that we were fortunate in 1917 in being able to prepare for war while the Allies protected us and permitted us to delay and blunder with impunity to ourselves, but at great cost to the Allies. If we had been compelled to meet Germany singlehanded in 1917, our Navy could not have protected us against the German Navy as it was at that time. We must have a Navy able to defend us effectively against any possible enemy from the moment war is declared. We cannot have such a Navy if the Daniels policies and methods

are continued. Unless the criticisms and suggestions of Admiral Sims are made effective, the unpreparedness of our Navy on some future day will result in a great national disaster. That is the point of the naval investigation; the prevention of such a contingency was the motive inspiring Admiral Sims and other critics of the Daniels administration. Mr. Daniels, in attempting to obscure this issue by sensational irrelevancies, by unfounded personal attacks and insinuations, was indulging in pure camouflage, in smoke-screen tactics, detrimental to his own reputation, to the good of the Navy and to the welfare of the country.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FAILURE OF THE DANIELS ADMINISTRATION; ADMIRAL SIMS' SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

I

THE Senate Committee recalled Admiral Sims on May 27, 1920. So much testimony had been introduced, and so many misrepresentations had been made that he was asked to make a final statement.

Sweeping aside the smoke-screen of diversions, evasions and misrepresentations with which the Secretary of the Navy had endeavoured to distract attention and to conceal the truth about the Navy, Admiral Sims in this final statement proved,— solely from the evidence presented by these witnesses, called at Mr. Daniels' behest,— that all of the principal criticisms contained in his letter of January 7, 1920, and in his testimony before the committee in March, had been fully substantiated.

Admiral Sims presented a clear and convincing analysis of the conduct of the Navy Department before the war and in the early months of the war. He reviewed briefly the extraordinary character of the testimony of the Secretary of the Navy. Finally, he presented constructive suggestions for the improvement of the Navy Department's organization.

II

Admiral Sims' summary of the testimony of the naval witnesses called at the request of the Secretary, agrees in general with the analyses given in the preceding chapters.

The following was his analysis:

"A review of the testimony presented by these departmental witnesses shows that it divides itself naturally into five main categories, which may be summarized briefly as follows:

"CONFIRMATION OF THE CRITICISMS WHICH LED TO THIS INVESTIGATION:

"*First:* The testimony of the Department's witnesses has in almost every case completely borne out the conclusions of my letter of January 7th, 1920, and the summary of my testimony before this committee in March last.

"TRIBUTES TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NAVY IN THE WAR:

"*Second:* Nearly all of the Department's witnesses have presented documents and made statements of opinion with regard to the achievements of the Navy in the war. Your attention has been repeatedly called to the faithful and efficient service performed by many officers, both previous to April 6th, 1917, in an endeavour to prepare the Navy for war; and, after that date, to conduct the war efficiently and successfully. The inevitable inference from this testimony is that I have not only failed to recognize these services, but have cast aspersions on them. Nothing could be farther from the truth. At no place in my testimony and at no time have I in the slightest degree reflected upon these services. On the contrary, in my testimony, in public statements, and in articles recently published, I have expressed the full measure of my admiration and appreciation of the magnificent achievements of the American Navy in the war, in spite of the handicap under which it worked.

"CONDUCT OF THE WAR BY THE DEPARTMENT:

"*Third:* Much testimony and documentary evidence has been introduced by Department witnesses concerning the conduct of the war by the Department. The officers who occupied the most responsible positions have testified to the long-continued and often unavailing efforts which they made to get the Navy ready for war in the years preceding our entrance into the war. They

have told you in detail of the difficulties encountered in the early months of the war. Their testimony has revealed a condition even more distressing than I could have imagined, and constitutes a much severer criticism of the deplorable conditions in the Navy Department previous to, and during the early months of, the war than any evidence which I have myself presented. They have shown that the Department failed to prepare for war, and in many cases resisted the adoption of plans and measures which would have made possible an immediate and effective entrance into the war. These witnesses have also disclosed the full measure of the hesitation and delays and the disregard of military principles by the Department in the early months of the war.

"NECESSITY FOR A REORGANIZATION OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT:

"Fourth: This condition in the Navy Department was tacitly recognized by practically all of the Department's own witnesses. There was an almost unanimous agreement in their expressions as to the necessity for a reorganization of the Department so as to make it a military organization able successfully to prepare for and conduct war operations. The officers most closely connected with the Department's organization during the war were those who have testified most strongly with regard to the need for this reorganization. Further comment seems superfluous.

"CAUSES FOR THE CONDITIONS BROUGHT TO LIGHT:

"Fifth: The Department witnesses, testifying with regard to the responsibility for the conditions which have been brought to light, are in general agreement that these are due primarily to three causes:

1st. The faulty organization of the Navy Department.

2nd. The policy governing the Department's action previous to our entrance into the war and during the early months thereof.

3rd. The failure of the responsible head of the Department to take the action required, both before and after the outbreak of war, to meet the urgency of the situation, to prepare the Navy for

war, and to strike at once on the fighting front with all available forces."

III

Admiral Sims restated the motives that had inspired his letter on "Certain Naval Lessons of the Great War." He exposed the absurdity of the charge that he had in any way attacked the Navy or belittled its war record, by calling attention to the handicaps against which the officers and men of the service had to struggle. In striking terms he insisted on the imperative necessity of paying heed to past mistakes that we may avoid them in the future.

The following passages from his statement will illustrate his contentions:

"It is a very natural and a very human impulse, in the pride of one's accomplishments, to desire to forget one's errors; and, if this were merely a matter of personal interests or if it were merely a question of national pride, there would be no necessity of inviting attention to truths which are necessarily so exceedingly unpalatable, if one may judge from the tone of the testimony which has recently been given before this Committee. But as a nation we have the national safety to consider. Our only guide in facing the unknown events of the future are the lessons that we can draw from the past. Our surest means of preparing to meet the dangers we may be called upon to face is to study carefully the immutable principles which underlie warfare; the application of those principles under war conditions; and to observe, conscientiously and calmly, the result of past violation of these principles. Only thus can we make our service more effective in the future and prevent the necessity of enduring again the dangerous and what might, under less favourable circumstances, have been the fatal consequences of such violations of these principles in warfare, as I believe this investigation has established.

"SUCCESS IN WAR DOES NOT PROVE THAT NO ERRORS WERE MADE BY VICTORS

"Closely associated with the point that I have just referred to, our disinclination to admit our own mistakes,—is another contention which is always raised after a war has been won. The proverb that nothing succeeds like success is apt to mislead those who are too blindly optimistic and self-confident. Nothing would be more dangerous, however, than to assume that because we were eventually successful everything we did was necessarily right. On many occasions success has been obtained and wars have been won, not because no mistakes were committed, but in spite of the mistakes. The mere fact that the war was won does not prove that we did not commit very dangerous errors. The obvious statement that we, in association with the Allies, were victorious over Germany in the Great War does not in the slightest degree prove that in a future war, under conditions less favourable to us, a repetition of the mistakes which, in 1917, had happily no fatal consequences, would not result in a national disaster.

"WHY MISTAKES AND INEFFICIENCY OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED

"While not in the least desiring to imply any criticism of our naval efforts which made possible the winning of the war, I considered it my duty to invite attention to the mistakes which postponed victory and resulted in unnecessary losses of blood and treasure. Your attention has been repeatedly called to the fact that in warfare time becomes one of the most essential elements of strategy. A few months' delay, in times of peace, or in a war where we were immune from enemy attack during those months, may seem to have no grave consequences. A military service, however, which is so constituted that it cannot go to war and effectively operate, without a delay of many months, which has an organization which must be remade under the stress of war conditions in order to handle military operations, is fundamentally wrong. The same delays under other circumstances

would be disastrous, as the history of warfare so repeatedly demonstrates.

"If it is possible, therefore, by a study of the causes of those delays, and by an analysis of the defects in the organization responsible for them, to avoid their repetition in the future, it is, obviously, not only wise, but imperative that a careful study of these causes should be made. The witnesses who have appeared before you, while insisting that the Navy fought well in the war, which nobody has ever denied, have also insisted that the Navy Department's organization is inadequate and that we were not able to go to war with our full force within the time that military success requires. It is for this reason, that, in spite of the fact that we were successful in the war, in spite of the fact that the navy added new laurels to its already proud tradition, it seems to me, not only wise, but imperative, that we should take into account the errors which were committed, and endeavour to provide such a remedy for the causes as to prevent their repetition as far as it is humanly possible to do so."

IV

Admiral Sims, in reviewing the activities of the Navy Department from 1913–1919, revealed the full extent of the admissions of the naval witnesses, by making clear the significance of these admissions.

The Secretary of the Navy had consistently opposed all efforts to improve the departmental organization. No definite fundamental policy had been established, by which all activities could be guided. No adequate war plans were prepared or approved, or put into force, to insure preparedness for war in time of peace and successful operations in time of war. As a result of the attitude of the Secretary, said Admiral Sims, the improvements in organization effected by Secretary Meyer in 1909, instead of being extended, were abandoned.

"Under the present administration, the Secretary himself has continued to be the sole co-ordinating agency of the various

bureaus and divisions of the Navy Department. The chiefs of bureaus still continued to be responsible only to the Secretary. No means was provided for co-ordinating their activities in the preparation and maintenance of the fleet, except for such sporadic and uncertain co-ordination as the Secretary himself could provide. It is, of course, readily apparent that no civilian could possibly possess a sufficient technical knowledge of naval and military matters to direct or co-ordinate intelligently the operations of the various branches of the naval services, and it must be clearly recognized that any Secretary must be guided very largely in his decisions and in his co-ordinating activities by the advice and assistance of naval officers. The only question at issue, consequently, is whether this advice shall be responsible advice or whether the Secretary shall be forced to depend upon the often irresponsible opinions, however sincerely held, of differing naval officers."

This situation resulted inevitably in inefficient and unsound decisions on the part of the Secretary. Admiral Sims quoted Captain Pratt's remark concerning the refusal of the Secretary in 1914 to ask for the 19,600 men needed at that time. "The Secretary," said Captain Pratt, "accepted the advice of Admiral Blue, and almost every naval man thought that Blue was dead wrong. . . . I hold Blue very responsible for the advice he gave, . . . but the system is wrong, where you can co-operate first with one naval officer, then with another and then with a chief of bureau, and get just as many different ideas as you talk to men. That ought to be co-ordinated under the head who is charged with the policy and the plans, so that you do not get this diffusion of ideas, but do get one concentrated effort."

V

Admiral Sims discussed similarly the failure of the Secretary to prepare the Navy for war:

"As a result of a peculiar interpretation of the policy of neutral-

ity, which the Secretary considered it his duty to enforce in the Navy Department, no adequate steps were taken between 1914 and 1917 to prepare the Navy for a possible war with Germany. . . . The Secretary displayed a very great interest in the expenditure of funds from the point of view of economy alone — often without regard to military considerations —. . . and in looking out for the welfare of enlisted men, but he consistently rejected or failed to act upon recommendations which were made to him to prepare the Navy for war, to draw up adequate and officially approved plans, or to provide for the increase of personnel necessary for the war complements of the vessels of the Navy. . . . There is no record whatever of any action whatever having been taken to prepare the Navy especially for such an entrance into the war, until after the breach of diplomatic relations. . . . So far as the policy of the Secretary was concerned, the European war and the possibility of our being drawn into it was officially ignored. The result inevitably was, as Admiral McKean, Admiral Badger, Admiral Benson and Captain Pratt have testified, that the Navy as a whole was not in a state of material readiness for war in 1917, that it lacked many essential types of ships, and that its personnel was hopelessly inadequate, so inadequate, indeed, that Admiral Niblack has stated to you that the chief problem of the Navy in the first six months of the war was to train men rather than to fight."

Admiral Sims then discussed the lack of plans in 1917. He praised warmly the often vain efforts of the General Board, and of Captain Pratt to get action, after war had begun, saying that:

" The more I review the situation as it was in 1917, the more I am amazed at the extent of the achievements which the Navy accomplished. The fact that the Navy was able to do as well as it did, was undoubtedly due to the efficient and unsparing efforts of these officers in the Department. They had recognized the conditions long before war broke out and had endeavoured to take such steps as they could, to get ready for war. . . .

". . . The heads of the Department, instead of providing the effective organization, the enthusiastic leadership and the will to

victory which would have made a unit of the Navy Department organization, failed to bring about that co-operation and to provide that leadership. 'The individual officers had to do, by their own personal efforts and by personal co-operation and conference with other officers, what should have been foreseen and provided for in the organization of the Department and in its war plans."

Admiral McKean, when asked whether he could give the committee the general basic plan on which the Department was working in 1917, had completely confirmed this summary of Admiral Sims when he said:

" Impossible. There is no such thing in existence."

VI

The results of the lack of preparedness, of the inefficient organization, the absence of policy or plans, of the pacifism of Daniels were clearly shown in the early months of the war. Admiral Sims described graphically these results.

" There could hardly be a greater contradiction than that between the situation as it actually existed in April, 1917, and that which the Secretary has described to you and which he has expressed in his reports to the President. Admiral Benson, Admiral McKean, Admiral Badger, Captain Pratt, all agreed that his expression that the Navy was ready from stem to stern on the day we declared war was not accurate from the professional viewpoint, and explained that it was probably a journalistic phrase and that they did not know what the Secretary meant to imply by it."

Yet Mr. Daniels on May 26th had under oath testified that the " stem to stern " expression

" is one of the best statements that I ever made, and one of the truest. It is one of my statements that I think is really a good epigram and really sums up in a few words the whole story of the Navy. If I had written a whole book, I could not have said

more truly. . . . The Navy was ready from stem to stern. The fleet was ready, for it was mobilized the day war was declared. . . . The Navy Department was ready; for every bureau and office performed the greatly added duties of war with even greater efficiency than they had functioned in time of peace."

In commenting on this statement of Mr. Daniels, Admiral Sims said:

"The condition of the Navy in 1917 was one of unpreparedness for war. For three years the Department's policy had prevented any adequate preparation to meet a situation such as that presented on April 6, 1917, when it became necessary for the Navy to play its part in the war . . . the only parts of the Navy that were at that time in an efficient state as to material and personnel were the dreadnaught divisions and some twenty destroyers which were with these divisions. All the other vessels of the Navy were in varying states of material depreciation and were all short of crews. In spite of the fact that it should have been apparent for at least a year that when the Navy entered the war its chief effort must necessarily be directed against combating submarines, no plans had been prepared for this. The types of vessels that were needed were not ready. No effort had been made to provide additional vessels of this type or to provide the necessary crews. . . . There had not even been any consideration of the possibility of sending naval craft overseas."

VII

One result of the condition of the Navy in 1917, was the lack of any aggressive plans, and a long delay before the Department could be persuaded to let the Navy fight submarines in the war zone.

"In April, 1917," said Admiral Sims, "the whole of the plan of the Navy . . . was to mobilize the fleet, to defend the Atlantic coast ports, and to provide for an offshore patrol by sending out available light forces of the Navy on arduous patrol duty along the Atlantic coast, 3,000 miles from the nearest submarines."

This statement was fully confirmed by the testimony of Admirals Benson and Badger and Captain Pratt, as quoted by Admiral Sims. Admiral Sims believed this to be due to ignorance and inertia.

"As the Navy Department had no plans for the use of the American naval forces in the submarine campaign, and as apparently no real study had been made of the situation by responsible authorities, it is not surprising that the Department did not at first hear with enthusiasm the appeal of the Allies for assistance in the war zone. . . . No policy having been decided upon, other than that of meeting each situation as it arose, it became necessary to spend long hours on deliberation and discussion of each and every individual request for forces. *Naturally, too, it is only to be expected that it would be somewhat difficult* for an administration which had been for three years devoting itself insistently to opposing any effort, looking toward successful war operations on the side of the Allies, to change its spots overnight and to throw itself suddenly with full vigour into the battle line, alongside the Allies. Every suggestion as to the employment of forces abroad during the first few months . . . was subjected to long deliberations and discussions. . . . It was not sufficient to say that forces were needed; the Allies must first explain in detail all their own plans and policies, justify their own conduct of the war and explain every conceivable circumstance connected with any request for reinforcements.

". . . In the meantime, the Navy Department, as the Department's witnesses have all testified, were concerned, not primarily with defeating the enemy, the German submarines, . . . but their chief concern was that of defence. . . . The heads of the Department struggled against the greatest difficulties not only in getting the Navy ready to fight after war had begun, but also in making up their mind as to where the fighting was."

VIII

Admiral Sims also effectively demolished Secretary Daniels' absurd claims that the Navy Department was actuated only by the "boldest and most audacious plans" and com-

pared the policy actually followed by the Navy in 1917, with that insisted upon by the President.

"It is interesting," remarked the Admiral, "to contrast the 'bold offensive' policy which apparently inspired the President from the time we entered the war with the policy of inaction, hesitation and delay on the part of the Navy Department. . . . The President, as the speech to the officers of the fleet . . . in August, 1917, and his message to me on July 4, 1917, plainly indicate, was in favor of acting boldly and disregarding the possibility of loss, if the victory might thereby be hastened. . . . Yet at the very time that the President was expressing these sentiments, the Navy Department was subordinating the sending of assistance to the Allies to local defensive measures, was considering, not the winning of the war, but the saving of the few American ships which might have been sunk, if two or three submarines had visited the Atlantic coast in 1917. . . ."

In discussing the President's views on the naval situation in 1917, Admiral Sims disclosed the full story of the events preceding the President's message of July 4th.

For three months the Navy Department had refused or failed to send its available forces abroad. It had announced no policy, formulated no plans. It had refused to adopt or assist in the convoy system. It had failed to support Admiral Sims, to inform him of his activities or even to reply to his recommendations. Finally, at the end of June, the situation appeared so desperate that Admiral Sims felt obliged to bring all possible pressure to bear. He appealed to Ambassador Page, who cabled the State Department asking what the naval war policy was to be. He later sent a personal message to the President urging action.

At the same time Sims suggested to the British Admiralty and the French Ministry of Marine that they make representations at Washington. So Sims and Jellicoe prepared a message that Balfour sent to Lord Northcliffe, then High Commissioner at Washington, for transmission to the State

Department. The French government also asked greater naval co-operation from the United States, especially in the convoy system.

These representations came to the attention of the President. He was apparently much concerned and much annoyed. He must have taken up the matter with the Navy Department. At least two very significant developments are to be noted. The President cabled Admiral Sims criticizing the British Admiralty for inaction, lack of plans and failure to meet the situation aggressively. The Navy Department suddenly changed its ways, and, in a week, Admiral Sims was informed of more favourable action on his recommendations than in the previous three months.

Admiral Sims commented forcibly on these developments. "There is a remarkable coincidence," he said, "between the time at which the President himself intervened directly in naval matters and the time at which the Department began to heed the requests from the Allies for reinforcements, and to adopt and put into effect measures on which they had long been delaying action."

Of the President's July 4th message, Admiral Sims said:

> "I consider this message to be, in effect, not so much a criticism of the British Admiralty as an indictment of the inaction and delays that had characterized the Navy Department's activities during the early months of the war."

In describing the effect of the President's message Admiral Sims told of the series of decisions made by the Navy Department almost at the same time. A brief chronological record will illustrate his point:

June 20, 1917:

Department cables, "In regard to convoy, I consider American vessels having armed guards are safer when sailing independently," and declines further assistance to the Allies.

June 21, 1917:
Admiral Sims appeals to Ambassador Page.

June 23, 1917:
State Department writes Navy Department asking statement of policy.

June 24, 1917:
Department's first cable relating to policy places home defence before intervention in war zone.

June 25, 1917:
Sims again appeals to Page, also to British and French governments.

June 26, 1917:
French government cables Washington urging U. S. to assist in convoy system.

June 28, 1917:
British Foreign Office cables Jellicoe's message to Northcliffe.

June 29, 1917:
Strong cable from Page to State Department.

July 3, 1917:
Secretary Daniels signs Captain Pratt's letter announcing policy of Navy Department — full co-operation, and willingness to send forces abroad subject to home needs, and requirements of a possible post-war situation.

July 4, 1917:
The President sends a message to Sims.

July 5, 1917:
Navy Department adopts convoy system and assigns seven cruisers to escort duty.

July 5–8, 1917:
Department decides to send thirty additional vessels for duty in the war zone, and to send forces to Gibraltar.

July 7, 1917:
Department finally grants Sims a staff and announces that three officers will be sent!

July 9, 1917:

Department asks advice as to how troop convoys ought to be handled, having learned from first convoy how they should not be handled.

Department cables policy letter of July 3 to Sims, this being the first statement of policy he had received.

July 12, 1917:

Department takes over German ships to man them in transport service.

July 13, 1917:

Department decides to send forces to Azores region.

July 20, 1917:

Department decides to concentrate shipbuilding efforts in a destroyer program.

Admiral Sims was convinced that

" It was from this time — that is from July 4, approximately — that the Navy Department began to act with a certain amount of promptness upon the requests from the Allies. . . . It is of course possible that this sudden change of front in the Navy Department was due to other causes with which I am not familiar, but it is a striking coincidence that this almost unexpected series of favourable decisions by the Department should have come in the week immediately following the sending of this dispatch by the President to me. . . ."

IX

Admiral Sims also referred to the impropriety on the part of the Secretary in introducing matter reflecting on an allied Navy.

" I regret extremely that the Secretary of the Navy has seen fit, in introducing this message of the President, to reflect upon the services of the British Admiralty to the Allied cause. It was a personal and confidential message, addressed to me, which I had guarded with the greatest secrecy. I would have considered myself guilty of a grave breach of confidence if I had

brought the matter before this Committee. I am also surprised that the Secretary of the Navy should introduce this message as evidence against me, when the facts which I have just related show that the criticisms of the President bear with even greater force against the Navy Department, as it was then conducted, than against the Admiralty. We can only assume that the President from the moment that we entered the war was trying to carry into effect a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war. It seems very probable that the President himself was not familiar at the time with the extent to which the Navy Department was violating the very principles which he laid down; principles which were accepted by the Navy Department almost immediately after his message was sent; principles which were in complete accord with the recommendations which had been made by the Department's representative abroad during the previous three months; principles which had been insistently but vainly urged upon the Department in these months by the General Board and by Captain Pratt and other officers in the office of Operations. The very fact, that the Department almost immediately, took favourable action on many matters which had been recommended long before, shows how the head of the Department at the time regarded the President's message. It is hardly possible that there could have been no connection between the President's insistence on boldness and offensive action, and the sudden abandonment by the Department of its timid, prudent and defensive policy for one of co-operation with the Allies in the war zone in the measures which alone could and did meet the issue of the submarine campaign.

X

The historic character and the unusual phraseology of the President's message to Admiral Sims warrant its reproduction. The reply of Admiral Sims to the President is no less interesting, as it contains the most excellent description of the allied situation at the time, and a full statement of what our naval action should be.

The President's message was:

"White House,
"7 p. m., July 4, 1917.

"Strictly confidential, for Admiral Sims, from the President.

"From the beginning of the war I have been greatly surprised at the failure of the British Admiralty to use Great Britain's naval superiority in an effective way. In the presence of the present submarine emergency they are helpless to the point of panic. Every plan we suggest they reject for some reason of prudence.

"In my view this is not a time for prudence but for boldness, even at the cost of great losses. In most of your dispatches you have quite properly advised us of the sort of aid and co-operation desired from us by the Admiralty. The trouble is that their plans and methods do not seem to us efficacious.

"I would be very much obliged to you if you would report to me, confidentially of course, exactly what the Admiralty has been doing and what they have accomplished; and added to the report your own comments and suggestions, based on independent thought, as to the whole situation, without regard to the judgments arrived at on that side of the water.

"The Admiralty was very slow to adopt the practice of convoy and is not now, I judge, protecting convoys on an adequate scale within the danger zone, seeming to prefer to keep its small craft with the Grand Fleet. The absence of craft for convoy is even more apparent on the French coast than on the English coast and in the Channel.

"I do not see how the necessary military supplies and supplies of food and fuel oil are to be delivered at British ports in any other way within the next few months than under adequate convoy. There will presently not be ships enough and our own ship building plans may not begin to yield important results in less than eighteen months.

"I believe that you will keep these instructions absolutely and entirely to yourself, and that you will give me such advice as you would give if you were handling the situation yourself and if you were a running a navy of your own."

Admiral Sims, in reply, sent the following message on July 9, 1917:

"July 9, 1917.

"From: Admiral Sims, American Embassy, London.
"Via: State Department.
"To: The President.

"I have sent by the last mail to the Secretary of the Navy an official paper, dated July, and giving the present British naval policy, the disposition of the vessels of the fleet and the manner and method of their employment.

"This will show to what extent the various units of the fleet, particularly destroyers, are being used to oppose the submarines, to protect shipping and escort convoys.

"It is hoped and believed that the convoy system will be successful. It is being applied as extensively as the number of available escort cruisers and destroyers will permit. The paper shows also that there remains with the main fleet barely sufficient destroyers and auxiliary forces to meet on equal terms a possible sortie of the German fleet. The opposition to submarines and the application of the convoy system are rendered possible solely by the British main fleet and its continuous readiness for action in case the German fleet comes out or attempts any operations outside the shelter of its fortifications and its minefields.

"I am also forwarding by next mail copy of a letter, dated June 27th, from the Minister of Shipping to the Prime Minister, showing the present shipping situation and forecasting the results of a continuation of the present rate of destruction. Briefly, this shows that this rate is more than three times as great as the rate of building. A certain minimum amount of tonnage is required to supply the Allied countries and their armies. This letter shows that at the present rate of destruction this minimum will be reached about next January. This is not an opinion. It is a matter of arithmetic. It simply means that if this continues the Allies will be forced to an unsatisfactory peace.

"The North Sea is mined by British and German mines for more than a hundred miles north and west of Heligoland up to the three-mile limits of Denmark and Holland. Over thirty thousand mines have been laid and additional mines are being laid.

"It is through these neutral waters that almost all submarines have been passing.

"A sea attack alone upon German ports or any heavily fortified ports could not succeed against the concealed guns of modern defences.

"I have just been informed that preparations are now being made by a combined sea and land attack to force back the German right flank and deny the use of Zeebrugge as a destroyer base, though not yet definitely decided by the War Council; that this would have been done long ago but for disagreements between the Allies.

"The German fleet has not left the neighbourhood of Heligoland for about a year.

"I am aware of but two plans suggested by our government for preventing the egress of German submarines. These were contained in the Department's dispatches of April 17th and May 11th, and were answered in my dispatches of April 18th and May 14th, respectively.

"These same suggestions and many similar ones have been and continue to be made by people of all classes since the beginning of the war. I have been shown the studies of the proposed plans, and consider them impractical.

"It is my opinion that the war will be decided by the success or failure of the submarine campaign. Unless the allied lines of communication can be adequately protected, all operations on shore must eventually fail. For this reason and as further described in my various dispatches, the sea war must remain here in the waters surrounding the United Kingdom. The latest information is available here and can be met only by prompt action here. It is wholly impossible to attempt to direct or to properly co-ordinate operations through the medium of communications, by letter or cable.

"Therefore, as requested by you, if I had complete control of our sea forces with the success of the allied cause solely in view, I would immediately take the following steps:

"1st. Make immediate preparations to throw into the war area our maximum force; prepare the fleet immediately for distant service. As the fleet, in case it does move, would require a

large force of protective light craft, and as such craft would delay the fleet's movements, we should advance to European waters all possible craft of such description, either in service or which can be immediately commandeered and put into service; that is, destroyers, armed tugs, yachts, light cruisers, revenue cutters, minelayers, minesweepers, trawlers, gunboats and similar craft.

" 2nd. Such a force, while waiting for the fleet to move, should be employed to the maximum degree in putting down the enemy submarine campaign and in escorting convoys of merchant ships and troops, and would be in position at all times to fall back on our main fleet if it approached these waters.

" 3rd. Prepare the maximum number of supply and fuel ships and be prepared to support our heavy forces in case they are needed.

" 4th. Concentrate all naval construction on destroyers and light craft. Postpone construction of heavy craft and depend upon the fact, which I believe to be true, that regardless of any future developments we can always count upon the support of the British Navy. I have been assured of this by important government officials.

" 5th. As far as consistent with the above building program of light craft, particularly destroyers, concentrate all other ship building on merchant tonnage. Divert all possible shipping to supplying the Allies.

" 6th. As the convoy system for merchant shipping at present affords better promise than any other means for insuring the safety of lines of communication to all military and naval forces on all fronts, we should lend every support possible to insure success to this, and we should co-operate with the British authorities in the United States, and here, who are attempting to carry out the convoy system.

" I believe the above advice to be in accordance with the fundamental principles of military warfare. The first step is to establish here in London a branch of our War Council, upon whose advice you can thoroughly depend. Until this is done, it will be impossible to insure that the part which the United States takes in this war, whether it is won or lost, will be that which the fu-

ture will prove to have been the maximum possible. It is quite impracticable for me, nearly single-handed, to accumulate all the necessary information, and it is not only impracticable but unsafe to depend upon decisions made in Washington, which must necessarily be based upon incomplete information since such information cannot be efficiently communicated by letter or cable.

" This can be assured if I be given adequate staff or competent officers of the required training and experience.

" I urgently recommend that they be selected from the younger and most progressive types, preferably War College graduate men, of the type of Twining, Pratt, Knox, McNamee, Stirling, Cone, Coffee, Cotton, King, Pye.

" I wish to make it perfectly clear that my reports and dispatches have been in all cases an independent opinion, based upon specific and official facts and data which I have collected in the various Admiralty and other government departments. They constitute my own conviction and hence comply with your request for an independent opinion."

XI

In his statement Admiral Sims emphasized the significance of this message. It was far from being filled with the " vague generalities," of which Mr. Daniels had spoken in describing it. It was, in effect, a restatement of all of Admiral Sims' previous recommendations, the outline of a policy and of plans that should have been adopted three months previously, but which, in point of fact, were in many cases not adopted until at least three months later.

" I think it hardly necessary to comment further upon this message. Every one of the six steps which I recommended to the President in this dispatch could have been, and should have been, part of the primary plan which should have been, and could have been, put into effect on the day we declared war. With the information then available every one of these steps could have been and should have been foreseen; and if there had been an adequate planning section in the Department, and if the head of

the Department had approved the action of such a planning section, some such plan would have been formulated and would have been put into effect at once.

" The Department's witnesses, especially Admiral Badger and Captain Pratt, have testified that they recommended practically the same measures in March, April and May, but without success. I had been recommending these very same measures since April 14th, 1917, equally without success.

" Within a very short time after the President had sent this message to me and I had replied, the Department had acted in the manner recommended in my reply to him, and had adopted the various recommendations as being essential to a successful prosecution of the war against the submarines.

" It is frankly absurd to claim that I have been contending that I was the only officer in the Navy whose judgment should have been accepted; but it so happened that I was the officer sent abroad to represent the Department and to obtain from the Allied Admiralties, and from the British Admiralty, principally, the information upon which the Department could base its action. It was, therefore, inevitable that the information which I sent should come from British or Allied sources.

" It was, therefore, equally inevitable that the recommendations which I made, and which were in complete agreement with the war experience of the Allies, should be more sound than those made by any officer, no matter how intelligent or how highly trained, who did not possess this same information, and who did not have this same opportunity of discussing the situation with the responsible heads of the Allied Navies. No plan based on insufficient information and incorrect premises can ever be successful, no matter how logically based upon false premises, how striking, how bold, or how spectacularly attractive it may seem.

" I am not contending that the officers of the Department were inefficient, or that they failed in any respect to do their duty according to their lights. I am trying simply to make clear that they necessarily could not have had the information that was wholly essential to make decisions involving the details of operations in the war zone and, for the same reasons, they could not intelligently review such decisions. My criticisms are not di-

rected against these officers, who I am confident in every instance were putting forth their best efforts, but against the condition in the Department which made it impossible for them to work as efficiently as would otherwise have been possibly the case."

XII

The part of Admiral Sims' final statement devoted to the analysis of the testimony of the Secretary has already been quoted in the chapters dealing with that testimony. It may be of interest at this time, however, in view of Mr. Daniels' violent personal attacks, to include for the sake of contrast Admiral Sims' summary of the responsibility of Secretary Daniels for the condition of the Navy in 1917.

The Admiral, after reviewing the various causes for our unpreparedness, and for our comparative ineffectiveness in the early months of the war, said:

"If there had been in the Navy Department a true appreciation of the mission for which the Navy exists, every effort would have been made during 1916, and perhaps during 1915, to man and prepare for war the existing light craft, and to hasten the construction of as many additional craft as possible of the type which, in the opinion of the professional observers, would be needed, if war became necessary.

"The witnesses have agreed that for reasons which seemed mysterious to most of them, the navy was directed by a pacifistic interpretation of the policy of neutrality, and that the policy of the Department was largely responsible for the unpreparedness which existed in 1917.

"All of the witnesses in referring to the conditions prevailing between 1915 and 1917, and in the early months of the war, have also agreed that, under the existing organization of the Navy Department, the only responsible authority is the head of that Department. Inasmuch as no naval officer was given responsibility under his direction for the co-ordination of the military activities of the navy, no single naval officer can be held responsible for what happened. The responsibility must rest where the au-

thority rests, that is, with the head of the Department. All of the officers have testified that such is the case.

" These same officers, in commenting upon the Department's methods, have pointed out many instances in which the Secretary followed, in many cases, a variety of advice given him by bureau chiefs, or by other officials who were not concerned with any subjects other than those of their own division or bureau, and whose recommendations, in many cases, were not based upon the general needs of the navy, but upon the conceptions of those individual officers as to what those needs might be, or as to the wishes and needs of their own divisions.

" The witnesses have testified, as did Admiral Benson, Admiral McKean and Captain Pratt, that, in their conferences with the Secretary of the Navy, the term ' war ' was practically never used. In substance, they substantiated the testimony of other witnesses, such as Captain Laning and Admiral Plunkett, who called attention to the Secretary's unwillingness even to consider the idea of war having anything to do with the administration of the navy. These officers pointed out repeated cases in which action was held up for long periods by the failure of the Secretary of the Navy to take action himself or permit the Chief of Naval Operations to take action which seemed, in the opinion of that officer, to be necessary.

" There has never been any disposition to question the good intentions of the Secretary of the Navy. It could hardly be doubted that he has the welfare of the service keenly at heart. But it also seems perfectly clear and perfectly well established, by the testimony of the Department's witnesses, which has already been quoted, that, in the very essential matter of preparing the navy for war by drawing up war plans, by insuring material readiness and by providing and training adequate personnel, the Secretary either failed, or refused, to consider or act upon the conception that the chief function of the navy is to be prepared to carry out the national policies in time of war. Sufficient testimony has been introduced on this point to place it beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt. Our navy was not ready in April, 1917, to enter immediately the campaign against the German submarine, and to exert its full force in protecting the over-

seas communications of the allied forces, or in transporting and supplying our own forces to be sent overseas. No adequate steps had been taken to meet the particular situation which we faced when war began and it took many months after the actual declaration of war before the navy was permitted to act effectively in this campaign."

XIII

The part of Admiral Sims' first statement which had been most severely condemned, not only by the Secretary but by half a dozen of the departmental naval witnesses, was the Admiral's estimate of the probable results of the conditions he had criticized. Few of the officers had really questioned the validity of the criticisms, or the existence in 1917, of the conditions described by Sims. Many of them took issue with his estimate that these resulted in prolonging the war four months, by the unnecessary sinking of 2,500,000 tons of shipping, and that 500,000 lives and $15,000,000,000 had been needlessly sacrificed by this postponement of victory.

Few officers, however, really disagreed with Admiral Sims. They accepted his premises, but refused to draw the logical conclusion. This Admiral Sims proved by quotations from nearly all of the departmental witnesses.

In summarizing the testimony, he said:

"Practically all of these witnesses, while stating firmly personal opinions in contradiction to the results of my estimate, in their testimony confirmed in fact the premises upon which my estimate was based.

"Manifestly their inability to draw a logical conclusion from these premises has no bearing upon the chief contention which I made, that is, that the Navy Department's delays and lack of preparedness did result in postponing the active intervention of our full naval force for many months; that this naval force, when it did exert its power, contributed out of all proportion to its numbers to the victory, and consequently resulted in shortening the war. The Secretary of the Navy, Admiral McKean, and

other witnesses, have themselves told you that the war was shortened from six to nine months by our activities when once we did begin fighting wholeheartedly. If our naval force, after it got into action, by assisting very materially in combating the submarine menace, by making possible the safe transport of an army (principally after March, 1918) shortened the war, it must be equally apparent that if this naval force had been in the field from April, 1917, on, the submarine menace would have been checked and gotten in hand much sooner; the transport of troops overseas could have been expedited, and the war could have been shortened still further.

" In my previous estimate before you, I merely assumed that, if our intervention had been effective from four to six months earlier than it actually was, we would have shortened the total duration of the war, not only the six or nine months mentioned by these witnesses, but ten months or a year. The Secretary and Admiral McKean have told you that in 1917, and even in 1918, it was believed that the war would not be ended until the summer or fall of 1919. They ascribed the victory of 1918 to two causes, which are very intimately connected; first, to the breakdown of the morale of German population; and, second, to the effectiveness of the American intervention. They have all admitted that the American intervention had a tremendous effect in depressing the morale of the Germans. and convincing them of the futility of further prolongation of the war. From their own arguments, therefore, it appears that, if our intervention had been effective earlier, the German morale would have similarly broken down earlier; that, therefore, the victory of the Allies would inevitably have been accomplished earlier than it actually was.

" It should be clearly understood in all this discussion that I have not at any time condemned the navy for prolonging the war. I have not insisted that the sacrifices of blood and treasure, to which I referred, could be rightly charged to the navy itself, or indeed that the responsibility rested upon any individual in or out of the navy. I merely stated an obvious military conclusion — that mistakes and delays in warfare are detrimental; that even if they do not bring defeat they cause unnecessary losses and un-

necessary prolongation of the warfare. Every student of military history, however amateur he may be, is, of course, thoroughly familiar with this fact. He knows as well as I that the price one pays for unpreparedness for war, and incompetence in the conduct of war, for delays and military mistakes in the face of the enemy, is either military disaster or unnecessary losses.

"Fortunately, conditions were such in the Great War that we escaped military disaster. We escaped any very great losses of men. But it does not follow at all that our sacrifices in bringing about the victory were not unnecessarily great. because of the delays and errors which marked the early months of the war in 1917. There is, of course, ample room for very great differences of opinion as to the extent of these delays and the resulting sacrifices. So far as the investigation is concerned it seems to me that the size of the estimate is a matter of no consequence. If, as a result of mistakes and delays, the war was delayed a single day or a single thousand of lives were lost unnecessarily, I should consider my criticisms more than justified, if they had as their result such a careful analysis of the causes as to make impossible the repetition in the future of similar mistakes and the consequent danger of disaster.

. . . . . .

". . . The Department's witnesses . . . all admitted that the American forces, once they entered the war, did very effective work, and that it would have been very much better, and greater results would have been accomplished, if we could have gotten our forces over sooner. These officers have also testified that, in their belief the navy, when it did get into the war, shortened the duration of the war from six to nine months. In view of this fact, it seems that my own estimate, that if we could have been in the field in the first month in adequate numbers, instead of six months later, we would have still further shortened the war, has been abundantly confirmed. Therefore, in order that my estimate may be less distasteful to some of my critics, let me state it this way. The navy in the war performed splendid and magnificent services to the cause of the Allies. By their efficiency and because of the ability, initiative and enthusiasm with which their personnel performed their duties, they contributed to the

victory out of all proportion to their actual numbers. As a result of their efforts, the war ended in November, 1918, instead of running until the following summer. The navy, therefore, was to a great degree responsible for shortening the war from six to nine months.

"If the navy had been permitted to get into action from the first month of the war, if the Navy Department had been adequately prepared for war, if it had had plans for the kind of war that the navy had to fight in 1917, if it had co-operated wholeheartedly with the Allies from the very beginning, our navy's achievements would have been even greater. Having gotten into the war earlier it would in that earlier period have done just as much and just as splendid service as it actually did do later. The navy, therefore, instead of having the credit for shortening the war six to nine months would have had the credit of shortening it from ten months to a year. This estimate is in effect the same as my original one, but I imagine that, stated in this way it may be more agreeable to those who are apparently concerned more with the form than with the substance of the criticism."

CHAPTER XXIII

NAVAL LESSONS OF THE GREAT WAR

I

THE hearings in the naval investigation came to an end on May 28, 1920. Chairman Hale in the last session read letters from Rear Admirals Fiske and Fullam replying to the personal attacks made upon them by Mr. Daniels, and completely refuting his charges. Admiral Fiske emphasized a point that is worth noting. The preparedness measures put into effect before war began, the approval of the administrative plan, in 1915; the creation of the Office of Naval Operations in 1915, the establishment of the Naval Consulting Board in 1915; were all measures Fiske had advocated for two years before the Secretary finally approved or accepted them. As a result of Admiral Fiske's fight for preparedness these measures were put into effect. They provided at least an initial step toward preparedness and made it possible in 1917 to get the Navy ready for war and into the war, with a delay of only six months. Without these measures, which Secretary Daniels had long opposed, the Navy Department, as Admirals Benson and McKean and Captain Pratt admitted, would have been in worse chaos, than that which Captain Pratt described as existing in April, 1917.

II

The evidence presented to the committee has been fully reviewed. The conclusions to be drawn with regard to the correctness of Admiral Sims' criticisms are too obvious to re-

quire statement. Every essential point was fully proven not by assertion, by personal opinions however authoritative, but by the evidence of the official records and the admissions of the naval officers who served in the most responsible positions in the Navy Department before and during the war.

III

The causes of our unpreparedness for war, of the Department's delays in getting the Navy into the war, of the errors that were made, were made equally clear by nearly every officer who testified.

These can be stated briefly in the order of their importance.

1. The Navy Department imposed on the Navy a pacifistic interpretation of neutrality which made any real preparedness measures for our war with Germany impossible before March, 1917. The Secretary of the Navy himself was responsible for this situation.

2. The Navy Department lacked a sound consistent policy, based upon our national policies and upon a consideration of our interests. As a result there was no general unity of purpose or action in the activities of the Department.

3. The Navy Department lacked entirely officially approved plans to insure adequate preparedness before war began or to make possible quick and successful operations after a declaration of war. The lack of plans was due partly to the pacifism of the Secretary, partly to the lack of a general naval policy, partly to the inefficient organization of the Department.

4. The Navy Department organization was inefficient and "unfit to conduct war." It consisted in reality of at least thirteen independent organizations. Each of these had its own policies, its own plans, its own interests, and there was no common policy, no unity of purpose, such as could only

have been brought about by the establishment of a unified departmental policy and of departmental plans based on this policy. As a result the activities were poorly co-ordinated. Naval considerations and needs were subordinated to a great variety of other motives. During the war the Department became after a year a fairly well unified organization, but only because the individual parts voluntarily recognized the authority of the office of operations.

5. The inefficient organization of the Department was due largely to Mr. Daniels himself. Probably through fear that his autocratic and irresponsible control of funds and of patronage might be hampered or made a matter of official record, the Secretary consistently opposed any effort to improve the organization, so as to make it fit to handle naval matters and to function efficiently in making the Navy ready for war and in directing its operations successfully in war. Even when the office of Naval Operations was created, he limited its activities with a jealous eye. He failed even to order to the Office of Operations, the number of officers provided for by Congress.

6. The Secretary refused to listen to talk of war or of preparedness. All of his naval advisers admitted this. He was concerned solely with the purely peace activities; with economy in expenditure, with semi-socialistic enterprises such as the establishment of industrial plants to manufacture armour, guns, clothing, etc.; with measures advertised as inspired by a desire to improve the lot of the enlisted men, which were either totally impracticable and had to be abandoned, or were detrimental and demoralizing in their effect on the Navy, in creating discontent and insubordination, and in destroying discipline and morale.

7. In his selection of officers to serve in important positions in the Department and in the fleet, the Secretary usually acted on his own initiative without even consulting his chief naval advisers. His selections sometimes amazed

and dismayed the service. Officers whose previous careers indicated no outstanding quality except a degree of subordination to authority, amounting to subserviency, were often selected to the most responsible positions, to be Chief of Naval Operations, Chiefs of Bureaus, Commanders-in-Chief of the Fleets. Officers who fought for sound organization, for naval preparedness, for the placing of the primary emphasis on the naval rather than the civil aspects of the Navy, were forced out of responsible positions. Officers who wanted to serve in the Department had to sacrifice the good of the Navy to their own ambitions. The result was fatal to the spirit and morale of the whole service. Stagnation, cynical despair, often took the place of the old splendid spirit of the Navy.

IV

The statement of the condition that prevailed in the Navy from 1913 to 1917, and the analysis of the causes of these conditions suffice to make clear the naval lessons of the war. The mere statement of the conditions is in itself a suggestion of the lesons to be derived from our naval experiences in the Great War. The testimony presented to the Senate committee deserves to become a classic document in the study of war. A careful analysis of the evidence and a real application of the results of such an analysis will prevent any recurrence in future of the situation that confronted the Navy and the country in 1917.

Any final statement of war experience and its significance is not yet possible. The summary that is given below is therefore only intended as a tentative suggestion of conclusions to be drawn from the evidence now available.

V

CONCLUSIONS

The chief naval lessons that we can draw from our experience in the great war would appear to be the following:

1. Naval policy must depend upon national policies. The Navy is only the agency for carrying out national policies when diplomacy fails and the test of war comes.

2. The size and strength of the Navy, the types of ships and other craft to compose the fighting fleets, the strategical plans for the use of the Navy in war, must be determined by a careful analysis of the kind and extent of naval power necessary to assure national defence and the maintenance of national policies.

3. The naval policy must be modified from time to time to meet world developments, especially progress in matériel inventions and changes in world politics. It is absurd and useless to build war ships except for definite purposes. These purposes can only be determined by a consideration of the use to which the navy would be put. This, in turn, depends upon international relations.

4. From 1913 to 1917, these principles were consistently ignored and violated. Naval policy was not formulated to suit the world conditions and our own national policies. As a result, when our intervention in the war became necessary, the Navy was unable for a long period to support by successful operations our national policies.

5. The Navy Department must be reorganized. It must be given an organization adapted to war purposes and primarily intended to conduct war successfully. The Navy exists in time of peace only that we may depend upon its fighting effectiveness in time of war. The Department should be so organized as to provide a definite delegation of authority and to place the making of purely naval decisions in the hands of properly qualified men, while leaving the de-

termination of general policy in the hands of the representative of the national Administration, the Secretary of the Navy.

6. The Navy Department, in order to be fit to prepare for and conduct war, must have a single highly developed thinking and planning body, to provide a systematic, organized and intelligent direction like that possessed by all large business concerns, but heretofore lacking in the Navy Department. The planning body must provide methods for carrying out the naval policy determined upon by the administration, to insure the effective enforcement of our national policies.

7. The Navy Department must be so organized that its executive head shall receive responsible advice on purely naval questions, based upon a systematic and thorough study of naval conditions and in accord with the naval policy determined upon. Responsibility and authority must be defined and determined and must go hand in hand.

8. The Navy Department must have its various bureaus and subdivisions so co-ordinated, preferably by the Chief of Naval Operations instead of by the Civilian Secretary as at present, as to make sure that every activity of the Navy, and every penny spent on the Navy shall be devoted exclusively to carrying into effect the detailed departmental plans based on the naval policy decided upon.

9. The Chief of Naval Operations should be the officer whom the leading minds of the Navy judge to be the best qualified in strategy, tactics, logistics and administration to prepare the Navy for war. To him should be delegated the task of so preparing it; on him should be placed the responsibility; to him should be given the necessary authority. His work must of course be carried on under the general direction of the Secretary, who should always have the power to enter as much or as little into the details of his subordinates' work as he wish. In order, however, to fix re-

sponsbiility and to prevent careless or irresponsible interference, it ought to be distinctly and definitely provided that all orders issued by the Secretary, that involve the movements of fighting forces or deal with matters of strategy, tactics, logistics or administration, should be given to the Chief of Naval Operations in writing. There should be a definite and unmistakable record of every official action of the Secretary. Only in this way can a genuine accounting be had from him for the exercise of the very great and despotic powers over the naval service which pertain to his office.

10. Congress should not attempt itself to determine naval plans or to make naval technical decisions as to the best way of carrying out that policy. Congress, in conjunction with the Administration, should determine our national policy, and thus our basic naval policy. It should leave the carrying out of this naval policy in the hands of the men educated by the government for the naval service. It should decide the amount of money the nation can afford to spend on the Navy, and require strict accountability for all expenditures. It should not decide by Act of Congress how the money should be spent in detail. In other words, there should be a naval budget. The Department should have power to use the budget in the way that will best fit the Navy for its mission.

11. The fleet should be limited to such vessels and other craft as we would actually use in case of war. They should have on board in time of peace sufficient men to make possible immediate offensive action in case of war. The fleet should be constantly maintained, and trained, as a unit to obtain command of the sea by winning naval victories and so exercise the command effectively when obtained. In the interest of economy in time of peace and of efficiency in time of war, every useless ship should be scrapped. From a military point of view, these old and useless ships must be considered so much junk: in time of peace they require excessive

and disproportionate expenditures of money and dock yard services and they require crews that could be better employed on effective ships; in time of war they will be an encumbrance to the fleet and a death-trap to their crews. Furthermore, their retention on the Navy list gives an utterly exaggerated impression, at least to the uninitiated, of our naval strength, for such impressions are normally based on the total quantities, on the number and gross tonnage of the ships of the Navy, without regard to the absence of fighting value in the case of these obsolete ships— ships that, as Lord Fisher expressed it, "can neither fight nor run away" from modern ships. No vessels should be kept in the navy unless required for its war efficiency. Emphasis should be placed on fighting qualities rather than on mere size. Numbers are ineffective against efficiency, training and wise leadership.

12. The personnel should be sufficient to man the fighting fleet of the power required for our national defence and for the maintenance of those national policies imposed upon us by the policies of other nations. Our personnel should be trained not for peace time drills, alone, but for war operations. The officers especially should be taught, not alone how to command the naval forces, but particularly how to command them in war. Their real study of strategy and tactics should begin, not toward the end of their career, as at present, but at the start. They should keep abreast of their advancement in rank and responsibility by periodic instruction throughout their careers.

13. The Navy should be so organized and conducted that naval progress will be continuous. It should have ample provision for the study and development of new methods and new weapons. Advancement should be based upon ability, achievement and leadership, and should not be an automatic progression by mere seniority.

14. No officer should hold a high command who has not

successfully completed the Naval War College course. The ability shown by officers in the work at the Naval War College should be largely considered in determining their promotions and assignments. Appointments to high commands at the initiative of the civilian Secretary alone is fatal to efficiency. The Secretary should be obliged to select officers recommended or approved by his senior naval advisers. They alone are in a position to judge of the professional as distinguished from the political and social accomplishments of an officer.

15. The Navy itself must clarify its thought, unify its efforts. It must stand out for the efficiency of the Navy and the good of the country. It must resist any tendency to disregard military needs and to use the Navy as a political tool. The officers of the Navy must maintain the spirit of their service and unite against such mistaken policies and such ignoring of real necessities as have occurred during the last administration. The Navy must clean house, eradicate sycophancy, and brand the time servers in its own ranks who betray the Navy for their personal advancement.

16. The country must take a more active interest in the welfare of its first line of defence. It must insist on having full and correct reports of the condition of the Navy. It must demand and exact a full responsibility from the officials entrusted with the direction and administration of the Navy. Naval officers should be permitted a greater liberty of expression in order that the repetition of such a demoralizing tyranny as that of Mr. Daniels may be prevented.

VI

Theodore Roosevelt stated the fundamental principles underlying naval administration and policy, in his letter to the Senate in February, 1909, transmitting the report of the

Mahan-Moody commission on naval reorganization. After referring to the principles laid down by Admiral Mahan, Roosevelt said:

" In their essence these principles amount to a declaration that the Navy should be treated, not with a view to any special or local interest, but from the standpoint of the interests of the whole country, and that all other considerations should be subordinated, to keeping it in the highest condition of military efficiency, for it must be prepared for war, or else it is useless, and it cannot be prepared for war unless always in the highest state of military efficiency. The whole object of the organization of the Navy Department is to create machinery which will, in time of peace, prepare for war. . . ."

The organization should be " based upon the fundamental and all-essential proposition that a navy exists and ought only to exist for war and for war alone: for the efficacy of the Navy in securing and guaranteeing peace depends absolutely upon its evident efficiency for war. Preparation for war can only be thorough and complete if the Secretary has the same expert military assistance and the same advisers in time of peace as in time of war. . . .

" Perfection of organization and training and perfect preparedness cost no more than slip-shod inefficiency in so spending money as to disregard, or even prevent or impede, proper training and preparedness. . . . Money should be spent wisely instead of, as at present, spending it so that a certain proportion is wasted in friction or useless work. Training and preparation are essential elements of success in war. It is necessary to have the best ships and to have a sufficient number of them; but the number and character of ships will not necessarily bring victory. Efficiency in organization and personnel must be the main dependence in securing victory where there is even an approximate equality in material."

The disregard of the fundamental principles from 1913 to 1917 was fully established in the naval investigation. The naval lessons of the war are nothing more than their reassertion. In the face of the present world situation to the West of us as well as to the East of us, they cannot longer be ignored with impunity.

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